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A FRAGMENT.

BY WM. W. LONG.

Soft eyes, whose love-lit passion
Thrilled my heart like wine;
White arms, loving and tender,
That once did round me twine—
You are only a dream
By the Past's bright stream—
A dream that once was mine.

I would give, to have you whisper
Once again my name,
All that the world hath given me,
Of its heartless wreath of fame.
To feel Love's bliss
From your red lips kiss,
Would make Heaven and earth the same.

A Strange Wooing.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN SEARCH OF HIM," "WHICH WAS HER DEAREST?" "UNDER A CLOUD," "A SLEEPING PRINCESS," ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

THE *fete*-day came at last. No happier maiden in England opened her eyes that summer morning than Ethel Devon. All the morning the girls and their mother were busy seeing that everything was ready.

The *fete* was to be held in two meadows belonging to Mr. Devon. This year the subscribers had been unusually liberal, and it was supposed that the attendance would be larger than ever.

Ethel wore her white muslin dress, her hat was covered with creamy feathers, and three roses were fastened at her throat.

"Oh, mamma, I am so happy!" she said, throwing her arms round her mother's neck.

"Bless you, darling!"

And, with a loving kiss, Mrs. Devon let her go.

The meadows soon presented an animated scene. In one was the large tent for the children's tea, and two smaller ones, where were exhibited fruit and vegetables raised by the boys, and needle-work executed by the girls for prizes. In the other meadow were two large tents, one of which was for dancing and the other for supper, the county militia band being in attendance.

"Ethel," said Grace, coming up to where Nell and Ethel were standing, "which of us shall go and lead off the children's games? I don't mind going for an hour, if one of you will relieve me then."

Nell could scarcely help laughing at the transparency of this suggestion. The company would not begin to assemble in large numbers for at least an hour.

"I don't mind going to amuse the children and staying with them," said Ethel good-humoredly.

She knew that, in whatever corner of the field she was, Hector would find her.

Grace looked relieved, and Ethel was soon deep in the mysteries of "Touch and Go," "Puss in the Corner," etc.

By-and-by she saw Hector arrive. Poor fellow! He was forcibly captured by scheming mammas, and dragged through hot tents to stare at hemmed dusters, shirts, and tea-cloths, and the sight of which was an abomination to him.

The children were at length taken off to tea, and Ethel, with a sigh of relief, sank down upon the grass in the shadow of a tent, and opened her big fan. Presently a shadow came round the corner of the tent, and, with a warning presentment as to who it was, she looked up and saw Lord Eynesford.

Her position was not dignified, and she blushed as she tried to rise.

"You look tired," he said, extending his hand to help her.

"Yes; I have been helping with the children. It is—rather exhausting," she replied still slightly breathless.

"Too tired to dance to-night?"

"Oh, no; I hope not!"

"May I have the first waltz?"

For a moment horror and amazement deprived her of the power of speech.

"Thank you; but I am engaged," she managed to say at last.

"The second?"

"I am engaged for that, too."

"The third?"

His manner was perfect, and he showed no sign of irritation. She dared not refuse, though her whole soul rose in rebellion.

Did he think this *fete champetre* was a sort of ball in the servants' hall, where the eldest son of the house danced with the scullery maid. So said her heart; her lips replied:

"I shall be very pleased."

"Don't forget—the third waltz."

"Oh, no; I shall remember!"

"Miss Devon," said Hector's voice—"please come. I have kept your place at tea through perils untold! A stout pupil-teacher, with red hair and a green hat, has designs upon it, and, unless you come at once, she will be in possession."

Ethel gladly took his arm and departed.

"Couldn't get to you before," he panted—"there's such a British crowd! Who'd have thought the peaceful little hamlet of Grange-le-Cross contained such multitudes? And the awful part of it is, they all know me! And I not only don't know them, but don't want to! I say, though"—lowering his voice—"what on earth has Eynesford turned up here for? Talk of the skeleton at a feast!"

"Yes; I wish he hadn't come!" Ethel said ruefully. "But, Mr. Fitzwarrene, why does he go nowhere? What is it that people say of him?"

"Oh, don't you know?"

"No, not a word—except that he felt his brother's death very much."

"Then you never heard the terms on which the two brothers lived?"

"No. Did they get on badly?"

"I should rather think so!"

"Don't let us go into that stuffy tent; stay outside, and tell me about Lord Glanvil and his brother."

"Oh, there is not much to tell! I wonder you never heard about it from Mr. Devon."

"He never mentions Lord Eynesford's affairs to us."

"Well, if I tell you, you must never mention who was your informant, will you?"

"Of course not!"

"Well, in those days there was not a more miserable house in England than the Hall. The old Earl never cared about his wife—she died, they said, of a broken heart, and left the two boys. They fought like a couple of bull-dogs; but the old Earl loved Guy and hated Ranulf. You see it was rather a shame—odds against Ranulf always; and injustice is sure to sour a fellow. The older they grew the more quarrelsome they became. At last the climax arrived—they both fell in love with the same girl. She accepted Guy, you know."

"Well, what then?"

"What then? How inquisitive you are! I never knew you took so much interest in the Eynesfords. Then Guy was shot while walking in the woods at St. Etienne; and the old Earl declared that Ranulf was the m——"

"Oh, Mr. Fitzwarrene!"

"He did, indeed! Of course every one thought that it was only the old man's raving. He loved Guy, and Guy was dead; he hated Ranulf, and Ranulf was living. He was sure that it was Ranulf's fault. The idea gained ground somehow. Miss Beaufort—the lady, you know, strengthened the suspicion by her conduct. It was thought that she never had cared for Guy, but accepted him for his title. Anyhow, when Guy was gone, Ranulf could have had her for the asking."

"But he did not? Surely that goes to show that he was innocent."

"Of course there was no evidence against him, except the fact that he was in France—at St. Etienne—at the time of the murder, and that it was the first time for years that the brothers had slept beneath the same roof."

"It is a perfect tragedy!" said Ethel, in horror-stricken tones.

"It was strange how the idea gained ground in the county. In France, at the inquiry respecting the cause of Lord Glanvil's death, Ranulf's answers were considered perfectly satisfactory; but when he came to England, to attend his father's funeral, every one was so markedly cool to him that he left the country, declaring he would never appear again in society till he had cleared his name by finding the murderer of his brother."

"Mr. Fitzwarrene, what do you think about it yourself?" she asked earnestly. "It seems a dreadful question to ask; but Lord Eynesford looks so—well, so strange. What do you think?"

"Fratricide is a crime one does not lightly impute to a man," he answered gravely; "but if he did it—by Jove, I should say he had strong provocation! He was only twenty-two, with the Eynesford violence of temper: and if ever any one possessed the art of 'riling' to perfection, that person was Glanvil."

"Then—you—think——"

"I don't imagine it was done in cold blood. There was a quarrel, doubtless. Perhaps the shot was fired in self-defence. Anyhow, he is no more guilty of deliberate murder than—why, it might have happened the other way, Glanvil might have shot him."

"I—I wish I were not going to waltz with him!" said Ethel slowly.

"Are you going to?"—hastily.

"Yes—I must. He asked me, and I had such a scolding for being rude to him the other day."

"I don't want to say a word against Eynesford; but he's not a man I should care for my—I mean, he's scarcely the man for ladies to associate with. He has the temper of a fiend, has knocked about the continent, nobody knows where, ever since he came into his title, and he is more than suspected of——"

"Don't!" said Ethel gently. "I am sorry now that I asked you to tell me."

"I have been imprudent, and you must not repeat what I have said. There is the first waltz beginning; don't let us miss it. What others will you give me, darling?"

The last word was just breathed into her ear as they joined in the dance.

During the whole of that waltz the Earl stood talking to old General Graves. He danced the next waltz with Miss Graves, who felt supremely elated at being chosen the partner of one who was not only an earl, but of whom every one whispered that he had done something he should not have done—which made him so fascinating!

The Earl had some difficulty in finding Ethel after that dance. When she entered the tent, with her hand on his arm, the sight almost took her mother's breath away.

"Elinor—Grace—has the Earl asked you to dance?" she whispered.

"No, indeed," answered Grace tossing her head—"apparently he likes to amuse himself with pert children!"

The Earl had been rather silent with Miss Graves, but he was even more so with Ethel. He went through the whole waltz without a break, only once putting the question, "Do I tire you?"

As the last note of the music died away, they passed out of the tent together into the cool, shadowy dusk of the summer evening.

"I have not danced for eight years," observed the Earl.

"You are not out of practice," said Ethel politely.

"Will you give me another waltz?" he asked.

"I am afraid I have none to spare," she answered.

This being said, Ethel racked her brain to think of a suitable remark. Ideas would not come, and at last she said, as if the fact had just struck her:

"It is a beautiful evening!"

"Yes; it is very calm; but it will not last. There is a storm coming—the glass is falling."

"Our dance, Miss Devon."

And Hector Fitzwarrene carried her off.

"Oh," cried Ethel, with an incautious sigh of relief, "how glad I am it's over! And I was as polite as ever I could be."

"I have found such a delightful nook for you to sit in!" said Hector almost in a whisper. "Come away; we need not dance—the time goes so quickly?"

Piloted by him, she passed through the crowd in the tent and away from the lights and music, many eyes following them as they went. There was not one who approached her in style or beauty.

Hector's face wore a strangely softened expression, and his tongue, generally quick and ready, seemed remarkably silent. As they reached the edge of the crowd, his right hand gently took possession of hers, which lay on his arm, and she did not withdraw it. Leading her to the seat he had chosen—a bench placed in a gap in the hedge—they sat down side by side, and Fitzwarrene raised the hand he held, and pressed his lips to it. The hand trembled, but remained passive in his clasp.

"Ethel!"

That was all he said, but there was a tender, lingering inflection of the voice which spoke volumes. He stretched out his arm and drew the girl towards him, she yielding silently.

The beautiful head, with its soft abundant hair, rested on Hector's coat for a moment, during which it seemed as though they had lived a lifetime; but the spell was soon broken. Hector's head was bending lower and lower towards the lips of the woman he loved, when the distant music abruptly ceased, and, on the summer night air, the sound of a scream was borne to them.

"Some one is hurt! Hark!" cried Ethel, springing to her feet.

"A girl has fainted, no doubt. Stay with me, love—you can do no good."

"It was mamma! It was my mother who cried out! I know her voice. Hector, let me go and see what it is!"

Without further resistance he drew her hand within his arm, and together they went towards the tent. Hurrying crowds were flocking thither, while inside was a scene of wild confusion.

"What is it? Who is hurt?" every one was demanding.

"It is Mr. Devon—Lord Eynesford's agent."

Ethel caught the words, "A fit!" "Dead!" "No, no; sunstroke." "A sort of paralysis."

In another moment General Graves appeared, forcing his way through the crowd.

"What gentleman has his horse here? Who will volunteer to go for a doctor?"

"Who is hurt?" said Hector.

"Mr. Devon—a stroke; he is speechless."

"My horse is here——" began Hector.

"If you love me, go!" cried Ethel.

"I daren't leave you in this crowd——"

"I am all right—I will go to mamma! General Graves, take me to mamma."

"I am going for Doctor Foster, General," said Fitzwarrene. "Take care of Miss Devon!"

The old General took her under his protection, and they reached the further end of the tent, where a wide circle had been formed, to give the stricken man air. His face was ghastly; his head was in his wife's lap, and she, with trembling fingers, was bathing his temples with *eau de Cologne*.

Upon this group came Ethel—Ethel with her hat in her hand, her hair disordered, her lovely face as white as her floating draperies.

"Oh, mamma—what is it?"

"He is dying, Ethel—dying! And no one will go for a doctor!" wailed Mrs. Devon.

"Some one is gone for a doctor, dearest; he will be here directly! Oh, papa, darling, look up! Don't you hear me, dear, dear, papa? Mamma, what was it brought it on?"

"A shock—he must have had a shock! Some one gave him a letter to read—and he has been so unwell lately—the least thing was enough——"

"Who gave him the letter?"

"I did," said a cold, metallic voice.

Ethel looked up at Lord Eynesford, with indignant eyes.

"How dared you do it?"

"I did not know that the effect would be so disastrous—how should I?"

"To-day—the *fete*-day—when he was so happy—when every one was so happy—to give him a letter containing bad news! You had no consideration—you might have waited!" she moaned, as she chafed the nerveless hands. "Why did you come to the *fete*? Why did you come to Grange-le-Cross at all? You might have stayed in Arabia!"

"Ethel—Ethel!" murmured her mother tearfully.

The girl had spoken too low for the bystanders to hear; but the Earl had caught every word. He did not reply; he stood motionless; but a moment later a servant in the Eynesford livery came up and spoke to him. Then he turned towards Mrs. Devon.

"My carriage is here," he said; "if you will allow me to lift Mr. Devon, he can be taken to Brook Lodge, where the doctor will be better able to attend him, and where we shall not interrupt the festivities as we are doing now."

"Do not touch him! You shall not——" began Ethel; but Lord Eynesford quietly put her aside.

He and his servant between them deftly lifted the inanimate form, and bore it from the tent, the guests forming an avenue for them to pass through, while murmurs of sympathy were heard on all sides.

CHAPTER V.

IT was just daybreak when Mr. Devon recovered consciousness. His wife alone was watching by him. At his first movement she was at his side, and met his eyes, fixed upon her in an awful dreary stare.

"Is it morning yet?" he asked.

"Day is just breaking, dearest."

"You have not such a thing as prussic acid in the house, have you?"

"Joseph, you are wandering, my dear one!"

"I am not—I am quite collected. My pistol there, in the case, is loaded. If you give it to me, I think I have sufficient strength to blow out my brains!"

"Hush—oh, hush, my poor dear!"

He grasped the coverlet with both hands, his features convulsed as if with agony.

"Did any of those standing around last night hear what I said when I fell?"

"No, dear—no!"

"Did you hear?"

"Not a word."

"Do you know whom that letter was from—the letter Eynesford gave to me?"

"No—how should I?"

"What became of it?"

"He picked it up—the Earl—when you dropped it. No one else saw it."

"Sure?"

"Certain. Whom was it from?"

"His London bankers."

"His London bankers?" she repeated, with a mystified air.

He laughed—a horrid, discordant laugh.

"You don't see daylight yet? Well, I'll tell you what it means. It was the action of a fiend to give me that letter then. It was done on purpose to make me convict myself. Bend down, and I'll whisper in your ear."

She stooped; then before he had spoken a dozen words, she uttered a low cry.

"Oh, Joseph—Joseph—don't tell me that! For your children's sake—not that! For my sake! Oh, merciful Heaven—I shall die, it will kill me!"

He lay white and rigid, staring straight before him.

"Perhaps you'll hand me the pistol now!" he said.

His wife crouched by the bed, like one ashamed to face the day. Three words danced before her dazed eyes; three words rang in her miserable ears. It seemed as if she never again could lift up her head and walk among women as their equal.

Every hope she had was shattered. Poor innocent Ethel's brilliant prospects were blighted forever. Nothing was left to the Devons but to creep away and hide their heads where nobody knew them; for the three words that the poor woman saw and heard were:

"Ruin—shame—disgrace!"

Briefly stated, the facts were these: Mr. Devon, in the long-continued absence of the Earl, had taken to speculating with his employer's money. Luck had been steadily against him; but at last a certain investment promised so fairly that he was led to make use of far larger sums than he had contemplated touching at first. The result was the loss of everything.

At this awful juncture the Earl arrived on the scene. In spite of all the manœuvres of the agent, now well nigh desperate, Lord Eynesford had at once divined that all was not right. Every penny the Devons possessed would not be near enough to make good the agent's embezzlements.

Mute with horror, Ethel heard it all. It was like the sound of a funeral knell in her ears. Good-bye to all her dreams of Hector and his love! The heir of the Fitzwarrenes could not marry the daughter of a man who had misappropriated his master's money—a common rogue and swindler!

During the first agonizing moments she could not even think of comforting her mother; she could only lie quivering under the pain inflicted, taking in gradually the horror of the situation. There was nothing to be done—no help and no escape anywhere.

Nell—good, practical Nell, seemed to be the least affected by the news. She sat by her father, who lay breathing hard, muttering continually:

"If it could only be kept dark—if it could only be kept dark!"

Presently he sank into what looked like sleep. Nell had sat patiently by for some time, hoping he had obtained temporary forgetfulness, when he suddenly rose and exclaimed:

"By Jove, yes! She might do it! Nell! Are you there?"

"Yes, I'm here."

"Fetch Ethel—fetch my beauty. He's struck with her, is the Earl. Don't tell me—he likes her impudence! He danced with her last night! D'ye think she'd go to him and ask him to look over it? He'll never get a man to manage the land better than I've done—and he needn't fear a repetition of—this folly. Tell my pet what I say. Fetch her here—I'll tell her myself."

"It was difficult to make Ethel understand what was required of her. To go to the Earl and ask him to overlook her father's villiany—she! A vivid flush of shame covered her cheeks as she helplessly wrung her hands.

"Oh, no, father, I couldn't—I couldn't! How could I face him—how possibly ask such a thing of him?"

"That's what we bring up our children for!" groaned the wretched man. "We love them, pet them, risk our very souls for them, to get them money enough to hold up their heads in the county; and, when our schemes fail, they turn their backs upon us. Oh, Heaven, I wish I was dead!"

She fell upon her knees beside him.

"Don't talk like that to me, my own dear father! You'll break my heart! I'll do anything for you, dear."

"It's life or death," he panted. "I might live if this were—hushed up. I swear I'll take my own life if he insists on—prosecuting!"

"Prosecuting—you?"

"He will—he will! Ethel, Ethel—ask him not to—ask him not to! Your poor mother!"

His forehead was bedewed with perspiration. Ethel crouched down on the floor by the bed, hiding her face in her hands. This was bitterness indeed.

Presently the door opened, and her mother entered.

"Joseph, Lord Eynesford is downstairs; he has come to know how you are."

"Now or never!" Now was the time; if she delayed she was lost—her courage would fail her. When she reached the door she paused.

"Father, my intercession will be worse than useless. It is only giving him a fresh opportunity to wound and trample upon us; but you shall never say I did not do all I could for you!"

Without further reflection she went quickly down-stairs, entered the drawing-room, and found herself in the presence of the man she hated. After a formal greeting, she dashed into her subject at once, so as not to give herself time to think.

"Lord Eynesford, I come to ask you something. Do you—that is, I suppose you—do not intend to retain my father as your agent?"

"After what has occurred—very naturally not. You—ah! Have you heard——"

"Yes"—with a quick gesture of pain—"I know. My father has been unfortunate——"

"It is exceedingly painful to discuss such a subject with a daughter, Miss Ethel; but you must allow me to say, Mr. Devon has proved himself unscrupulously dishonest. For several weeks I would not believe it. I fought against proof; but it is unfortunately out of my power to doubt any longer."

Ethel shivered from head to foot.

"If you could see him!" she said, interlacing her white fingers as she stood before him with bowed head. "He is heartbroken; he knows, he feels what he has done, now! And the hardest part is, he says he did it for us—that we might be rich!"—one hand went to her throat as if to check the quavering of her voice. "Lord Eynesford, you know—you must know, that he would never do such a thing again!"

"To retain a man who has proved untrustworthy in my service would be against my principles, Miss Ethel; it would be offering a premium to dishonesty. I should never be able to trust my agent again. It would be unpleasant for both of us."

Still she controlled herself sufficiently to plead.

"All that you say is just—you speak only of justice; but have you no pity? Think of—think of—mother—poor mother! Think what you do in sending her adrift at her time of life, to begin the world afresh. Of course, for us girls I do not plead; we are young, we can work; but, oh, think of mother! Think how we are all in your power! A word from you will make us happy or miserable. Be pitiful!"

"My nature is not a soft one, Miss Ethel," he answered coldly. "I am not given to pitying deliberate dishonesty. I pity the wretch who steals to buy bread; but I have no sympathy with an educated man who abuses a trust confided to him. Your father had no provocation; I do not consider he deserves my sympathy. But, if you are prepared to listen to terms, there is a certain condition on which I am prepared to permit your father to retain his post."

"Condition, my lord!" For a moment her pride was aroused, as she held her head high, with an air of dignity; but she drooped almost immediately, and became submissive again.

"Are you in earnest, Lord Eynesford?"

"Perfectly."

"There is a certain condition on which you are prepared to allow my father to retain his post as your agent?"

"There is."

"Is it a condition impossible of fulfilment?"

"I think not."

"If you could tell it me, I will acquaint my father."

"The answer rests with you alone."

"With me?"

"Yes."

There was a moment's silence, then the girl raised her eyes.

"Well, my lord—the condition?"

"The condition is, that you become my wife!"

"Such jesting, in a house filled with grief like ours, is unworthy of you, Lord Eynesford!" she replied, with a bitter smile.

"I do not jest. I undertake that no human being shall ever know what has passed. Your father shall retain his post as heretofore—everything shall be as it has been—if you will consent to become my wife."

"Are you mad?" she cried, putting her hand to her head, and recoiling involuntarily. "You cannot mean such an offer seriously! Do you know that I—hate you?"

"Yes; I know it."

"Well?"

"I do not ask you to love me. I ask you to marry me. The two things do not often go together.

The girl moved across the room as if bewildered; then she repeated—

"You are mad!"

"I am not; but I am deeply in earnest. These are the terms—the only terms—which will purchase my silence. I must have my answer now."

He went three steps nearer to her, but she retreated, with a low cry.

"I do not understand you—you do not mean what you say—you are mad—you must be! There is no reason in the world why you should seek me, unless it is because you delight in tormenting! Oh, Lord Eynesford, I have often been very rude to you. I was presumptuous in my ignorance; I did not know the terrible hold you had upon us! But do not take this cruel revenge! Do not make yourself and me miserable all our lives."

"You have heard my terms. I cannot alter them!"

She walked to and fro, up and down the room. Something told her that he was immovable, inexorable. In the silence she could hear her father's reiterated moans of pain, her mother's voice, broken with bitter weeping.

"It is in your power to stop all that with one word," said Lord Eynesford quietly. "No one will be miserable but you; and no one but you will know that you are miserable. A great many girls would not think it a misfortune to be a countess, even if they had to accept me as a necessary condition. May I have your answer?"

"It is true," she cried recklessly—"no one will be miserable but me! I don't know what bad angel put it into your head to say that; but it is true! And, since only I shall be unhappy, I will do it! What would I not suffer for my father? He shall never say I did not do all I could. I will be your wife. Now go away." She paused, leaning against the wall, her face deathly pale.

"I shall hold you to your word!" he said. "I should like to see Mrs. Devon, if you will kindly call her."

Mrs. Devon, coming down-stairs, met Ethel. The girl's face was almost livid; she was holding the balustrade, over which she was bent as if for support.

"No use! Oh, my poor darling child, I felt it would be so! He is a hard pitiless man!" She took Ethel in her arms, and kissed her cold lips; then, with an irrepressible sob—"Are you sure you said anything you could think of, my child—everything you could possibly think of to move him?"

Her mother's kiss seemed to unseal Ethel's lips.

"It is all right," she said, with a sigh. "There is no need to be unhappy, dearest mother. Lord Eynesford will do all we ask. Nobody is to know; and you are not to leave Grange-le-Cross."

"You don't mean it, my child—you don't mean it!" Mrs. Devon almost sank down upon the staircase in her agitation.

"He is there," said Ethel, pointing to the drawing-room door. "Ask him yourself. He wants to see you."

CHAPTER VI.

THE news that Lord Eynesford had proposed to Ethel, and that she had accepted him, sent Grace into hysterics. What had Ethel done that she was to become a countess? And here she was, locked up in her bed-room, refusing to take food, or to admit anybody; and probably grieving about that Fitzwarrene! Why did things always happen so unfairly? Why was not this chance given to her—Grace—who would have properly appreciated it?

Late in the afternoon Ethel opened her bed-room door in answer to the knocking of the maid.

"Mr. Fitzwarrene is in the drawing-room; he asked specially for you, Miss Ethel," said the girl, handing her young mistress a fragrant bouquet from the Warrendale hot-houses.

Ethel took the flowers between her chilled hands, and her tears fell upon them; but the first thought which occurred to her was, "I must not—I dare not see him!"

"Wait a minute, Sarah." She seized a scrap of paper, and scribbled hastily—

"Circumstances which I cannot control oblige me to refuse to see you. I am engaged to be married to Lord Eynesford. It is best you should know at once. I cannot give you any explanation.

"ETHEL DEVON."

"Oh, Hector, for pity's sake—for the sake of what you once believed me to be, do not judge me too hardly!"

She gave the paper, tightly folded, to the servant, and watched her take it away. In about five minutes the maid came back with another note.

After what passed between us last night

you owe me an explanation, Ethel! I will not be put off thus. I will hear the truth from your own lips. You have no right, dearest, to trifle with a love like mine. Come down and tell me what all this means. I am longing to help and comfort you.

"HECTOR."

Ethel was half-way to the door; her hand was on the latch. No; the sacrifice should be complete. She sat down again and wrote:

"You mention what passed between us last night. I am sorry I was betrayed into such weakness. Be generous and forget it. I will never see you again. Further attempts will be useless, and only add to my distress. E. D."

When she had despatched this second note she sat down with her hands in her lap, and said aloud:

"The worst part is over now! The rest ought to be easy now!"

Then her courage failed utterly, and she burst into tears.

The second morning after this, at about nine o'clock, a figure slipped from the door of Brook Lodge, and hurried down the shady path which led to the little wicket-gate.

The weather had changed, and it was a cold, wild, wet morning. The ground was sodden with torrents of rain, which had fallen all night. The trees swayed to and fro, the geranium-blooms were broken and spoiled.

Ethel Devon unfastened the gate and stepped out into the road. Evidently she was bound for some special destination, for she turned without hesitation, and walked down the road in the direction leading from the village.

She met only a laborer or two, who looked rather astonished as she passed; and soon, leaving the high-road, she opened a small gate leading into a thick plantation. On she went, never heeding that her skirts were soaked by the wet leaves and moss, nor that drops from the laden boughs were dashed into her face by the spiteful wind.

Ten minutes fast walking brought her within sight of a large, towering, gray-stone house, with high battlements, fantastically carved gargoyles, and a very large, deep porch.

Ethel had never been to the Hall since she was taken there by her father, as a little girl of six, before the old Earl's death. Now, for the second time, she stood on the threshold of the great, lonely house, and rang the hall-bell.

The butler, who opened the door, knew her well by sight, having seen her in church. He looked alarmed as he put the question:

"Is Mr. Devon worse, miss?"

"No; he is better, thank you. Can I see Lord Eynesford?"

"His lordship's at breakfast, miss; but I'll ask, if you will walk in."

The hall was so large and wide, it seemed as if she took several minutes to cross it. A footman, carrying a covered silver dish, stared at her in obvious astonishment. She almost laughed to herself as she contrasted her muddy boots and damp cloak with the sumptuous luxury of everything around her.

The butler took her into a room which had probably once been a lady's morning-room, but which was evidently never used now. The furniture was stiff and antiquated; it felt damp and looked desolate.

When the man had noiselessly closed the door and left her to herself, she walked to and fro on the dark carpet, trying not to think, for her courage was so small, compared with that of her antagonist.

Presently she stood still and listened. A distant door opened and closed. The sound seemed to reverberate through the great halls. A step approached. The girl clenched her hands as the door opened. It was the butler.

"If you please, miss, may I trouble you to step into the library?"

She followed him down another wing of the shadowy hall. Another silent door swung back on its hinges, and closed softly behind her.

She found herself standing in a large room full of light and warmth. The walls were lined with books; small tables stood about the floor, with sets of rare china or gems of sculpture upon them. The floor itself was of inlaid wood, with fur rugs laid over it here and there.

At the farther end of the room was a pure white, richly-carved marble mantelpiece, supported by figures of Greek maidens. The marble was tinged by the warm glow of an enormous wood fire which leaped and crackled on the hearth. The Earl stood before the fire, in a brown velvet morning-coat.

He immediately came forward, shook hands with Ethel, and offered her a low easy chair near the fire.

"You are wet," he said quietly. "It was imprudent of you to walk on such a damp morning."

She stood, refusing to take the proffered seat.

"Lord Eynesford, you can guess why I take the extreme measure of disturbing you thus. I come to make a last appeal to your generosity."

"I had better save you unnecessary pain, Miss Ethel. An appeal to my generosity is useless. Let us drop the subject. How is Mr. Devon this morning?"

"I do not know."

She spoke absently, holding her hand to her head as if in trouble or perplexity, then continued:

"Lord Eynesford, you shall—you must hear me! Your conduct is so strange and irrational, I cannot understand it! Did you hear—did you comprehend me when I told you that I could not bear you? The very sight of you is hateful to me! Surely no man in his senses could wish to possess such a wife! It would be as horrible to you as it would be to me. Do you understand all that?"

"Yes; I understand."

As she refused to sit down, he also remained standing, not appearing to look at her, but with his eyes fixed upon a porcelain copy of Canova's Eros and Psyche, which occupied a table near.

Ethel leaned one arm behind her on a massive escritoire, with the vain hope of steadying her trembling limbs.

"I have, at all events, a right to ask you to explain," she said. "I demand that you tell me your motive, if you have one, for this unaccountable and cruel conduct!"

"Young ladies very often overstate, and sometimes misstate their feelings," was the calm answer. "You say that you hate me; you believe that you do so; but the fact is not, therefore, necessarily true. So far as the world is concerned I do you no wrong in raising you to a rank which will be considered by every one, far beyond what you could ever have hoped to enjoy. As regards your own feelings on the subject, I do not think you know them yourself. The fact of my wronging you at all is, therefore, not proved."

"I do not know what you mean by presuming to speak to me like this. You imagine, because I am not yet twenty years old, and because I have seen but little of the great world which has taught you such wickedness, that, therefore, I do not know my own mind! You are mistaken, Lord Eynesford, as you will live to discover if you should persist in this unnatural, this horrible compact."

She had commanded her voice with difficulty; but now the angry tears coursed down her cheeks. She wiped them away passionately, and turned towards the silent man, as she went on:

"You have not yet favored me with your motives. I demand to know them! If I do not know my own motives, I presume you know yours. Tell me why you hate me so—why you wish to do me this awful wrong?"

"I have a motive, and a strong one; but I cannot tell it to you for two reasons: First, you would not believe me. Secondly, you would not see the force of it if you did believe me."

She leaned against the writing-table, and covered her face with both hands. She was at her wits' end, hopeless of making any impression upon this man's obstinacy.

"There is no pity for me—none?"

"None."

She changed her tactics, and stepped nearer to him. Clasping her hands, she turned her wan, beautiful face to his.

"Lord Eynesford, listen. I have been rude to you on several occasions! I know it. Is your resentment so deep and lasting? Oh, surely the punishment exceeds the offence. Set me some penance, some expiation for my fault, and I will gladly perform it! However hard, I will not shrink; but do not make my punishment life-long, do not condemn me to a misery which will last for ever! Be merciful!"

"You cannot alter my decision," he answered, after a pause.

"I ask your pardon on my knees!"

She knelt on the rug at his feet, her face upturned; with both her hands she held one of his.

"Lord Eynesford, if ever you longed unavailingly for pity, by the memory of that hour, have pity on me now!"

He drew his hand away, with a sudden, sharp exclamation.

"Ethel," he said, "rise directly! If you do not, I shall leave the room, and terminate this interview at once."

She bent lower, till her face was hidden.

"Oh, there is no mercy in the world!" she said, in a low, moaning voice. "But I will escape!" She sprang to her feet and faced him again. "I recall my promise—our compact is broken! Do your worst! I will not marry you!"

"Very well; I shall send down two constables to arrest——"

"Oh, no—no!" she cried.

"You will keep your promise then?"

"I must!"

Without another word she turned away and crossed the room. He followed her to open the door, ringing the bell for the butler to show her out.

She took no further notice of him, not even turning her head as she passed out. On she sped, through the damp plantation, where the sad wind moaned a dreary accompaniment to her bitter thoughts. She was half-way through the wood, walking mechanically, not noticing where she was going, when some one sprang forward from among the trees, her hands were taken, and a fervent voice cried—

"Ethel!"

"Hector! Oh, Hector, it is you—it—is—you!"

She was too feeble to offer resistance, and in another moment his arms were round her, and he was kissing her white cheek.

"Why did you send me away without seeing me?"

"Ah, Hector, let me go—you must not hold me—must not touch me! I'm—to marry—the Earl!"

"Ethel, you are false to me!"

"I am not! I never was, in word or thought. Till I die, I never shall be!"

"Now tell me why you are going to marry this man. I shall hold you till you tell me! At least I have a right to know why I am jilted like this!" he cried resentfully.

"Not jilted, Hector! I never promised you anything. If I had, it might have all been different! But I am thankful that it was not so. There was one pain, Hector, I might have had to bear, which would have been even greater than this—you might have given me up!"

"You speak in riddles; but I want to hear the plain truth! I could never have given you up—never! That's nonsense, of course; but, Ethel, I do implore you, be open with me—tell me what all this means!"

"I cannot tell you one word, Hector! There—that is all I have to say to you. If you stay here all day entreating, I can tell you no more. Be good to me—believe me! Oh, my love, is it likely that anything but the most awful necessity would bring me to say this? Let me go, Hector—let me go!"

"I shall go up to Eynesford and wring an explanation from his own sullen lips!" cried Fitzwarrene, furious with anger.

"He is here; there is no need to seek further!" said the quiet hard voice of the Earl, as he walked up to them. "Were you on your way to see me, Mr. Fitzwarrene? There is no right of way through these woods."

"I was on my way to see Miss Devon," replied Hector, with studied insolence. "But I shall have business with you, my lord, at your convenience."

"I shall be at liberty," returned the Earl politely, "when I have seen Miss Devon home. Are you walking our way?"

"Not yours, certainly!" answered Fitzwarrene, who was at a disadvantage, having lost his temper, while his adversary was perfectly cool.

"Ethel, it is not good-bye; it is *au revoir*."

She put both her hands into his, as though Lord Eynesford had not been there.

"It is good-bye for ever," she said in a low unnatural voice. "Ethel Devon is dead! Try to forget you ever knew her."

Turning, she walked on with the Earl until they were out of sight of Fitzwarrene. Then she stopped.

"Now, my lord, I will dispense with your further escort, if you please."

"Excuse me; I prefer to see you safely to your own gate. It is a mistake to have too many exciting interviews in one morning."

She would not answer; she only walked on, suffering in silence. Presently they paused at the little wicket-gate, where the loud murmur of the brook over the pebbles could be distinctly heard. The Earl unfastened the latch, and she passed through; but, as she did so, he suddenly put his left arm round her, stooped, and imprinted a kiss upon her lips. So sudden and hurried, so utterly unexpected was the act, that he was half-way down the lane before she had recovered from the sense of horror which overcame her.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

"UP THE SPOUT."—A story is told of an unscrupulous pawnbroker who once made a poor old lady pawn her clock in three parts, viz. (1) the clock, (2) the weights, (3) the pendulum—in order that he might make a penny extra by charging her for three tickets instead of one. This, by the way, is an exceptional instance, and its relation here is not intended to reflect on the character of the general pawnbroker, who would reject the idea as impossible. A ticket is given to the pawner and a duplicate ticket is pinned on to the parcel, which is then despatched "up the spout" to the weekly room. "Up the spout" is the trade phrase used to denote the transfer of parcels to a higher story by means of a lift or elevator.

FILLED WITH DIAMONDS.—A London paper prints a story from the diamond fields of Africa. A Kaffir was suspected of being in possession of uncut diamonds, and was pursued by officers of the law. When they came up with him he had just shot one of his oxen. Then they proceeded to search him. They ransacked his scanty clothing, they combed his woolly head, they tried all the usual processes, but never a diamond did they find, and finally they had to retire discomfited. Then the Kaffir proceeded to pick out from the dead ox's carcass all the diamonds with which his gun had been loaded, and which he had fired into the unfortunate beast when he saw the officers approaching.

"I UNDERSTAND."—A Singhalese blacksmith of India, who only knew two Tamil words, "namako thereum" (I understand), used them on every possible occasion. One day a Tamil man brought him his gun and requested him to draw the charge of powder and shot, as he was unable to do so himself. The blacksmith understood not one word that was said to him; but, unwilling to betray his ignorance of the language, replied "namako thereum," and proceeded to make a rod of iron red-hot and to insert it into the barrel. The owner of the gun, divining what he was about, told him most explicitly in Tamil the nature of the obstruction, to which warning, the foolish blacksmith replied, "namako thereum." The next moment he had inserted the iron rod into the muzzle. The result was disastrous. "Namako thereum!"

BUYING WIVES.—In Babylon, five hundred years before the Christian era, the custom of holding an annual auction of unmarried ladies prevailed generally. In every year, on a certain day, each district offered all its virgins of marriageable age; the most beautiful was put up first, and the man who paid the highest price gained the prize. The second in personal charms followed her, and so on, so that the bidders might gratify themselves with handsome wives according to the length of their purses. After this there would probably remain some for whom no money was offered, but the provident Babylonians managed that. When all the comely ones were sold, the crier ordered the most deformed one to stand up, and, after demanding, "Who will marry her for a small sum?" she was adjudged to him who was satisfied with the least, and in this manner the money raised from the sale of the handsome served as a portion to those who were not so favored, or had some imperfections.

SQUIRRELS AND OAKS.—It is a curious circumstance that many of those oaks which are called spontaneous are planted by the squirrel. A gentleman walking one day in the woods, his attention was diverted by a squirrel, which sat very composedly upon the ground. He stopped to perceive its motions. In a few minutes the animal darted to the top of a tree beneath which he had been sitting; in an instant it was down with an acorn in its mouth, and after digging a small hole, it deposited the acorn; then covering it, it darted up the tree again. In a moment it was down again with another, which it buried in the same manner. This it continued to do as long as the gentleman watched it. The industry of this animal is directed to the purpose of securing itself against want in the winter; and it is probable that its memory is not sufficiently retentive to enable it to remember the spot in which it deposited every acorn; the industrious little fellow no doubt loses a few every year. These few spring up, and are destined to supply the places of the parent tree.

ONE hundred pounds of rags will yield eleven pounds of sugar, the increase being due to the water absorbed during the change. They are digested in sulphuric acid, then diluted with water and boiled, and the result is sugar.

MY DREAM-LOVE.

BY A. Y. R.

Through the sweet early morning doth she come,
When, dim with dew, and tremulous with sleep,
The scented flowers give out their sweetest sighs;
When nature wakes, and standing peaceful, dumb,
Upon the hill-top, knows not it to weep,
Or smile upon us from the changeful skies.

Sweet dream-love that I never see when day
Drives all our finer thoughts from earth in haste,
Lest they should be entangled by the world,
I would not have thee 'mid this misery stay,
I would not have thee of my life's cup taste,
Nor would I that thy sweets were all unfurled.

Thou art mine own, when night's worst hours have fled,
And faint with fighting phantoms do I lie,
Waiting for that the dawn shall truly bring
Thy sweet calm eyes that tears may never shed,
Thy pretty hands that touch me silently,
Thine arms that fold me like some angel's wing!

What does it matter that thou canst not tell
Of all thou know'st, nor whisper of thy bliss,
Or kiss me on the lips that speak thy praise?
Words—sweetest words could only break the spell:
Thou canst not now betray me with a kiss,
So leaving me in sorrow all thy days.

Thou art my own; mine only; none can share,
Thy touch, thy presence, none may hear thy voice,
Nor twine thine hair, nor press thy small white hand.
'Tis but to me thou art so wondrous fair,
'Tis but my heart that thou dost bid rejoice,
'Tis but beside me thou canst take thy stand.

I will be true to thee, mine own, my dream;
With these once more I tread the ways of old,
And wander at the dawning, mid the hills.
For after all, our lives are what they seem,
'Tis fancy's wand that turns their gray to gold.
So rest art thou, that all my dream hours fills.

IN SEVERED PATHS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII—(CONTINUED.)

THOUGHTS, feelings, fears, hopes, an indistinguishable throng, crowded in upon her mind, crossing and recrossing the one dominant sense of bewilderment, of painful groping for one clear thread of light amid all the dark clouds of uncertainty that gathered around her.

Was it indeed true that Harold was gone to sea? If so, then Gilbert was no charlatan, deceiving her and perhaps himself, but one who had power, as he had asserted, to see "things in a glass darkly" which were hid from common sight.

But then what did the whisper mean that had touched her ear as from some far-away breath wafted across the surging of the sea?

Was it a true voice or a delusion? Joan of Arc heard voices, and the world called her mad to this day.

Surely the world was wrong! And in its wrong-headedness it burnt her, because she had gifts it could not comprehend. But such gifts could not be unlawful, since they were given to a woman so noble and so pure.

Yet she might not have coveted them; and they brought her sorrow and the sense.

As her thoughts reached this stage, Estrild looked up with a sudden flush of fear.

What had she gained by the momentary gaze into things beyond her sense? Only pain, only grief; for the vision showed Harold worn with sickness, and the words of the voice—a dying voice, that would not dare to lie—strengthened the mystery of Tristram's death, and brought her vow again into her mind with a burning sense of shame for having striven to break it.

"Oh, Harold, if you have sailed away—perchance in anger—for some distant land, it is better so—better that you and I should meet no more!"

She wept a little as her thought took shape in these words, but started up and wiped her tears hastily as the sound of an opening door and the creak of an ugly step showed her that in another moment her solitude would be broken in upon by the odious presence of Mr. Vicat.

He came in large and smiling, as with some new triumph shining on his coarse face.

"So you are quite alone, my dear, and they are all gone off to their pleasure-seeking?"

"They are gone with Mr. Ashleigh," said Estrild, not looking up from the book she had seized under the pretence of reading.

"Ah, so much the better! I wanted to have a quiet talk with you. And you have seen your cousin—my dear son?"

"Yes."

"Well, of course you like him—you feel interested in him?"

Estrild began to tremble. What did he mean by these questions? They roused her indignation, she knew not why.

"I perceive that Gilbert is very ill," she answered, "and I feel very sorry for him."

"He is not so ill as he appears," said Mr. Vicat. "It is astonishing how his strength lasts, in spite of his extraordinary abstinence at times from food and sleep. In fact, he is a mystery to us all; but I am in hopes, my dear, that you will understand him, and will eventually restore him to himself and to us. You guess perhaps that the earnest desire of my heart is to see you both happy—with each other."

A flush of scornful indignation rose to Estrild's face as she looked up at the coarse man who uttered this; but for the pitiful sake of his dying son she held back her disgust and anger.

"I will thank you, uncle, never again to speak such words as those to me. I warn you that if you do so I will quit your house."

"That is an impossible threat," said Mr. Vicat, with quiet satisfaction. "Your father's will, and my power through it, cannot be set aside by the caprice of a girl."

Vexed tears rose to Estrild's eyes, but she kept silent.

"You remain under my guardianship till you are of age, or till your marriage—with my consent," resumed Mr. Vicat. "And I trust you will soon see that your best chance of happiness lies in the choice I have indicated."

"Can you not see," exclaimed Estrild, with intense indignation, "that by the utterance of such a horrible idea you separate me from my unfortunate cousin—you prevent me from being friendly and helpful to him—you shut me out altogether from his presence? I shall never go to see him again."

She rose to leave the room; but Mr. Vicat stood between her and the door, and his big hot hand seized her by the arm.

"Sit down, girl," he said sternly, "and listen to what I have to say. I have something to tell you. I know that you are nursing a delusion. You fancy you will one day marry that fortune-hunting penniless barrister, Harold Oliver; but the sooner you clear your mind of that fancy the better. The young man is dead."

"Why tell me such a falsehood?" asked Estrild, as her heart quaked within her and the blood flew from her face, leaving it white as snow.

"I am not in the habit of telling falsehoods," said Mr. Vicat, with a sort of pompous indignation. "Sit down, my dear: you are a little overcome. Now, if you can bear the details, I will give them."

Unable to speak, Estrild signed to him to go on; she kept her eyes fixed on him in dread, not believing him, and yet listening to his hard voice in terror that his words might be true.

"Knowing Oliver was missing, I have been making inquiries lately; and I find that in company with a sailor he went on board ——"

"The Curlew. Yes, yes—I know all that," interrupted Estrild, in impatient pain; "and he is gone to sea with Daniel."

"Pardon me! The Curlew sailed without her owner, and without Mr. Oliver. He left that barque in disguise, and, in company with Daniel Pascoe, went to one of the lowest and vilest dens at the East-end of London. On leaving this place, dragging brutally with them some man whom they had seized, they were set upon by a press-gang. A fight ensued, in which Mr. Oliver was flung into the river and drowned."

"Mr. Vicat, this is a hideous and cruel lie! How could you know all this?"

Estrild was standing now, and her blanched face, her eyes dilated by fear, seemed to cow Mr. Vicat. He paused in his narrative, and once more implored her to sit down.

"No," she answered; "and I want none of your pity or help. Speak out all you have to say quickly."

"I had these details," continued Mr. Vicat, in a harder tone, "from an official at the Mansion House. Daniel's nephew had applied there for help, and gave the history of the night's proceedings as I have told you—except the fight with the press-gang: of that he knew nothing. He added that in the river he had found Mr. Oliver's dog, shot through the head, and also his own hat, which that gentleman had worn as part of his disguise. Hence he feared foul play, and asked what he should do. He was then told that a press-gang was out, and his friends had doubtless been seized; and he was advised to go home. He took that advice; he hoisted sail and away."

"Yes, it was a large ship," said Estrild dreamily, with her hand upon her forehead. "There is no such place in the Curlew as the one I saw. "Oh, Harold is safe!" she added, as her hand dropped and a smile broke on her face.

"Safe in heaven, you mean?" resumed Mr. Vicat, with a quick sharp look.

"No; he is on board one of the King's ships," she answered firmly.

"May I ask from whom you received that remarkable piece of information?" demanded Mr. Vicat.

Estrild gazed at him in the same dreamy way; she put out her hands gropingly, and grasped the back of a chair; a haze was over her eyes, through which Mr. Vicat's figure loomed out large and threatening, but indistinct.

Seeing her silent, he went on in quick sharp triumph—

"I ask that question because I am sorry any one should attempt to deceive you. I trust you will not allow yourself to be cheated by any deception, no matter of what kind, I have had ocular demonstration of the fact of Mr. Oliver's death. I am just come away from identifying his body, which has been drawn from the Thames."

There was still not a word from the pale figure who clung trembling to her support and listened, with that far-away look in her eyes, as if she heard another and clearer voice than his.

"I went to the river-side," continued Mr. Vicat, proud with a pompous sense of his own shrewdness, "when I quitted the Mansion House, in the certainty that I should gain fresh intelligence. And I did. I laid hold of a fishy kind of urchin who had seen the dead dog and had got his collar, which I bought of him. In reward for my liberality he informed me, with great glee, that the drowned gentleman was at the watch-house, 'drawed out of the water this mornin', an' nobody knows 'im,' he said. Upon this, my dear, I made my way to that place, saw the poor corpse, and identified it as being Mr. Oliver's. To-morrow I shall have to attend the inquest and give my evidence to this effect. I hope you believe now what I have told you. And pray do not grieve for a man whom only a disgraceful errand could have drawn to the vile place he visited that night."

He came near and put out his big hand to touch here; then Estrild awoke from her strange torpor, and, drawing back, she looked him in the face with steadfast eyes, as she answered:

"I do not believe a word you have uttered!"

"Good Heavens," broke in Mr. Vicat—"this is mere mad obstinacy! Why, the history and the inquest will be in the papers to-morrow!"

"Will that prove it true?" asked Estrild, in the same calm voice.

In answer, Mr. Vicat only shrugged his shoulders, as if her words were not worthy of reply.

"But, true or untrue," she continued, "it can make no difference to my fate, for, whether Harold be dead or living, I shall never be wife to any man."

She let go her hold of the chair to which she had clung, and walked with quick, firm step to the door. Mr. Vicat sprang forward and opened it for her, and the look on her white face, as she passed out, haunted him for an hour afterwards, till, with greedy haste, he had eaten a good dinner at the hotel to which Carrie's domestic tactics had driven him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE inquest was over, and the drowned man dragged from the river, whom no one claimed, whom no one recognized, was positively identified by Mr. Vicat as the missing Harold Oliver.

In vain the old laundress from his chambers protested her doubt, and declared that never in his life had he worn anything but the finest of linen in his shirts, and that such garments as those found on the dead man were not his, and never could be his. This objection was met by the acknowledged fact that he had quitted the Curlew in disguise; and this, added to the other and stronger fact that he was still missing and that Mr. Vicat swore this poor disfigured corpse was his, decided the verdict of the jury, and Mr. Harold Oliver was declared to be "found drowned, but how, and by what means there was no evidence to show."

The press-gang was left out of the question; no one liked to animadvert on the doings of a body so powerful, who acted within their legal right in seizing seamen; but each jurymen, in his own mind, came to the conclusion that Harold had defended himself and been drowned in the struggle that followed.

His companion, who was an undoubted sailor, had certainly been carried off; but the fleet had sailed, and neither his evidence nor that of any other sailor within its wooden walls could be procured. The Curlew also was at sea—hence Michael was no more within reach of the Coroner's summons than the others.

And meanwhile the drowned man had to be buried, and it was not until a fortnight had elapsed after his funeral that a cousin of Harold's arrived from Ireland, who paid for it honorably, though at the same time protesting that he did not in the least believe that he ought to do so, as he had a shrewd notion that his relative was still alive somewhere on the face of the sea or the land, and would turn up one day and repudiate the debt.

In this belief he sealed up Harold's papers, including Estrild's letter, which for a moment he looked at curiously.

"A lady's hand," he said, the gleam of a smile in his eyes, which vanished in the quick pang which touched his heart as he thought of the hopeless waiting of the writer for an answer that would never come.

"Shall I open this, find her name, and return to her?" he asked himself.

But, after balancing the letter irresolutely for a moment in his hand, he laid it with the others.

"She'll read of the inquest," he said, as he sealed the packet; "that will be enough. I'll not pry into any man's affairs, dead or living."

And with this he took his departure, and Harold's chambers were left to silence and dusty desolation.

Yes; Estrild read the account of the inquest; and more—she heard it daily discussed in Mr. Vicat's hardest tones, his voice like a hammer driving conviction into heart and brain that Harold was dead, and the world for her was empty of love—a melancholy waste through which her life wandered meaningless and alone.

Yet there rested within her soul a latent disbelief in this bitter sorrow; she was too young—earth could not show her its deserts so soon.

So day by day she drooped in expectation of she knew not what—in sick hope of things dreamt of that never came.

And through all she was in a maze of doubt, and a fever of longing was in her to seize upon the truth even if it brought despair.

In this mood, with thoughts heavy as death, she sought her cousin one weary evening, and implored his help.

"If you have the power," she said, looking piteously into his wild eyes, "show me the truth. Let me see Harold, dead or living."

"Are you come to me at last?" he asked reproachfully.

He was whiter, thinner, more unearthly than on the day she last saw him, and for a moment her own sorrow was chased away by the sight of this greater sorrow of youth and life lying beneath a deadly blight.

Carrie has kept me away," Estrild said eagerly: "she told me you were too ill to see me, or I would have come sooner."

He looked up with a strangely sad smile.

"And you are come now to the soothsayer—not the cousin. But what if I cannot help you? A gift not used perishes. For the last fortnight I have striven to numb my powers. I have fought them down, and even denied them."

Estrild had come to him in a faith that was half-mistrust, scarcely realising the strength of her sick yearning for his help till he spoke thus hopelessly.

"Why have you done that?" she cried, in bitter disappointment.

"I thought you were like Carrie—afraid of what you could not understand. I was anxious not to shock you—for I want a friend, not a convert. So I have left books unopened, and half-tried experiments untouched. To-night I am but a poor, helpless invalid. You can comfort me; but I can call upon no occult power to comfort you."

"And it would be useless to look in your crystal?" she asked wistfully.

"Try it, and see," he returned, as he took it from the cabinet and gave it to her. "Now let me hold your other hand."

But there was no power in his grasp to-night; the crystal remained dim, silent, dead, and Estrild's longing eyes gazed down into it in vain. At times she fancied she saw within it a faint quiver like the trembling of a shadow in water, but all was vapory and uncertain; and, with faith fast vanishing, she laid it down with a sigh.

But her cousin did not relinquish her hand; and as he held it in his tightened clasp he was dimly conscious of a subtle change in the touch of his fevered palm. It was a hand now all human, spreading, as it were, through her veins a piteous, inarticulate, human cry for companionship, and for something greater, stronger than friendliness—it was a touch that pleaded in dumb agony for a love.

As e flush rose slowly to Estrild's face, so did he slowly relinquish his hold of her white hand, till it fell by her side as though for a moment rendered powerless by the mingled flame of pain, longing, and fear that had passed from his [illegible] veins to hers.

For just an instant he kept silent, the shadow of some great emotion quivering over his pale face; then it passed, and he spoke as though no fire had risen between him and her in the silence of that thrilling touch.

"You see, as I told you, my power is gone. I have beaten it down, and it is numb and dumb; there is no magic in the crystal to-night."

"But will it not come again?" Estrild asked, in eager anxiety.

"Do you wish for it?" he said. "Are you not afraid of such things, and is it not fear and repugnance that made you hold aloof from me?"

"I heard you were ill, and I did not like to trouble you with my grief," she answered, as her eyes filled with tears.

"And now you come to me as to a poor magician, hoping to quell your grief. I wish I had the power," he added quickly. "If it would bring you comfort, I would make myself a veritable sorcerer if I could. But there is no sorcery in these things—they are all natural; oddly so few strive to know them—fear holds them back; and I thought you were, like Carrie, shaken with dread, and filled with a sort of compassionate hatred for the sorry wizard who dared to drag from earth and air and trembling flesh a few of the secrets they hold."

"I am not afraid for myself; I only feared for you when I saw you faint and ill. If it was by some natural power that that vision came into the crystal, then was what I saw and heard true? Does Harold live?"

Her voice rang through his heart like the agonized cry of a person in deadly peril imploring help and succor. Involuntarily he stretched out his hand as one does to one who is failing or drowning; but he drew it back quickly, clenching it and resting on it as though he needed the support himself that he dared not offer to her.

"If I were to say it was all a delusion, and her lover was dead, it would be better for her, and better for me."

This was his thought, coming upon him in a breath of fire; but he quenched it, and looked at her steadily and gravely.

"The crystal could not reflect what is non-existent; the vision in it was true."

Her eyes were on his face—she saw he believed what he said; but her own belief was shaken.

"Oh, I cannot think it true," she said, "unless you will show it to me again!"

"She does not count the cost to me," he thought painfully; but he smiled at her as he spoke:

"Give me a week, and you shall have your wish."

He saw the quick breath of relief she drew—he saw the flash of hope in her eyes, and his own drooped over his inward pain.

"For news of her lover she will come to me, and still think of me with shrinking repugnance, half deeming me a wizard."

"A week is a long while; could it not be sooner?" Estrild said.

"A fortnight was longer," he answered; "yet you did not deem it so."

"Oh, how could I think of you in such a time of agony?" she cried.

"No, you could not; and I am used to being forgotten. Now let us talk of other

things. Are you happier here than you were?"

"How can I be happier in the anguish of this suspense? I am dying of it daily. Oh, you cannot dream of what I am suffering!"

"I know something of suffering too," he said quietly. "But I want you not to talk of pain. It will lengthen the week," he added, half smiling.

She flushed a little, and turned away her pretty eyes from the sight of his pale face.

"I will talk of what you please—of anything that will do you good."

"It will please me to hear that you do not find the place so ugly and wretched as you first thought it."

"Well, I do think better of it," Estrild said; "for Carrie is always kind and helpful, and aunt is good, and the children are not always fighting. But Mr. Vicat is hateful, and ugly as ever. You do not expect me to change my opinion of him? I beg your pardon—I always forget he is your father."

"I wish I could forget it," he answered. "I suppose he is kind to you? He would be that for his own sake, to further his own plans; but do not let any simulated kindness on his part deceive you. Be on your guard always against him. Now I must show you the portrait of my mother as a sort of antidote," he added, with his melancholy smile. "I cannot let you hate both my parents."

He unlocked a drawer in his cabinet and took out a case, which he opened; and Estrild saw that it contained four miniatures; but he covered one hastily with his thin hand, holding it in such a way that she saw only the three others.

"This is my mother," he said a little eagerly, and with natural pride in the loveliness of the portrait. "And this is your father—her brother. Both these portraits were taken at Langarth before her marriage."

Estrild gazed at the pictures with a pang at her heart.

She had never seen a likeness of her father in early youth.

Was it possible he ever had a face so joyous as this—so young, so like Tristram? It gave her a little shock of surprise akin to remorse to have him brought befor her eyes in his youth.

She had never thought of him as young—it is the lot of parents always to be old to their children; and now she saw that he too had had youth and love and sorrow like herself.

But she did not speak of him or of Tristram; her heart was too full to utter their names.

"Your mother has a lovely face," she said to her cousin. "But who is this beautiful child with the golden hair and the happy blue eyes?"

Gilbert looked at her curiously.

"Surely you can guess whose likeness it was, and is not now?" he said, in a low voice. "Is it so very different from the one I showed you on your first visit?"

"Is it possible? Can it be yours?" she exclaimed; and then, ashamed of her own surprise, she checked herself and said no more.

"It was painted long before the blow that made me a cripple," he answered gently. "Do not look at it. I will put it away now."

He rose in saying this, and in doing so moved his hand from the picture it hid; and then Estrild saw that it was a copy of the old portrait at Langarth.

"I am sorry you have seen this," he said. "I was afraid it would startle you. My mother painted it from the ancient portrait before she left home. She copied too the Arabic words at the back. Shall I show them to you?"

"Of what use will it be since I cannot read them?" returned Estrild.

"But I have a translation of them," he answered; and, lifting the miniature from the case, he drew forth a thin slip of paper, on which, in a woman's hand, were written these doggrel lines—

"When Cumberland and Cornwall meet,
When bane is bliss and bitter sweet,
When man than horse shall prove more fleet,
And the rider lose, yet the race be won;
When hate by love shall be outdone,
This curse I leave will be outrun.
And it and I
Together die,
The doom of Carbonelli's cease,
My unblessed spirit rest in peace."

"What nonsense are you reading there?" cried an unexpected voice.

And there was Carrie standing before them, with an angry flush on her cheeks, though laughter was in her eyes.

"It is the translation Mary Armstrong made of the Arabic writing in the old Langarth picture of the Black Rider—the man who brings death to the house," said Gilbert.

"I should have thought Mary Armstrong had more sense than to write such contradictory rubbish," returned Carrie contemptuously. "There is not a single assertion in that prophecy that can ever come to pass."

"It was not intended to come to pass by the writer. He engraved it on the wall of his dungeon in bitter irony, that his brother might know his hatred would never cease, and his avenging spirit would haunt his descendants to their death through all time."

As Gilbert spoke, Carrie glanced at Estrild; her eyes were bright and dilated, her face was flushed, her lips were a little apart and trembling.

The girl's own face flushed slightly with that sort of fear which is half-anger.

"do you two amuse yourselves with such stories as that, do you?" she said—"Black Riders who carry death-warrants, ghosts who have stalked out of dungeons, prophecies of impossibilities, and——"

"Oh, Carrie, don't!" cried Estrild, interrupting her in trembling accents, with a hot hand upon her arm. "Your laughter only fills me with horror; for we all die through this man's hate. My father, my brother—are they not both gone? It is true, Carrie, and I am not mad; he rides to Langarth and kills us with his presence."

Carrie shook off her hand angrily.

"If you are not mad," she said, "to believe such things is the way to get crazed; and, as for that man, he is no ghost—he is alive and in the flesh."

"My dear Carrie," expostulated Estrild, "that is impossible; this portrait is copied from a very ancient one at Langarth."

"Nonsense!" persisted Carrie. "It is a likeness of the man who came here and advised mother to go to Cornwall. I recognised him at once, though his portrait is taken in some queer old fancy dress."

She leaned over to look at it, and then Gilbert seized her arm.

"Oh, Carrie, what have you done? Why did you tell her that?"

Then Carrie turned, and saw that Estrild was white as snow, and had clasped both her hands upon her forehead as if striving to shut out some dreadful sight.

"There is no dealing with you two!" exclaimed Carrie passionately. "You, with your wizard tricks, Gilbert, have nearly frightened me to death; and now, I suppose, Estrild——"

"No, Carrie, I will not frighten you," Estrild said. "For a moment I was startled, because your mother said at Langarth that this man had come to her, and I thought some chance likeness had deceived her; but, now that you make the same assertion, I am obliged to believe it."

"Well, and can't you believe it without being scared out of your wits?" exclaimed practical Carrie. "There's no need to think the man a ghost because of his likeness to a ghastly old picture that ought to be burnt and forgotten."

"If I were you, Carrie, and had lived your life, I should perhaps think and talk as you do; but my experience gives me other feelings. Let the matter rest now; I will not discuss it with you."

In saying this Estrild closed the case, and Carrie, seeing she was in earnest, shrugged her shoulders in silence.

Neither she nor Gilbert, as he replaced the miniature in his cabinet, perceived that Estrild had retained the slip of paper bearing Mary Armstrong's writing.

Carrie went to the door, bidding him an abrupt good night, and waited there impatiently for Estrild to follow.

"Remember your promise," she whispered, holding his pale thin hand between both hers, forgetting he had a man's heart, and thinking of him only as the poor medium through whose occult power she might again see some vapory vision of her lost lover.

He smiled into her beautiful face very sadly.

"In a week," he whispered back; "but this must be a secret between you and me."

By his glance towards his sister, Estrild understood she must be silent to Carrie, and, with a pressure of her hand as she let his go, she gave him a promise of secrecy.

Left alone, he leaned his face forward on his hand, pressing his lips on the one she had touched, and all his frame quivered with a mad joy, which in an instant changed into a bitterness like unto death.

* * * * * *

The week of waiting was nearly over, when one morning Carrie burst into the dingy back-parlor with her face brighter than usual.

"I am a better prophet than Gilbert!" she cried. "Here is the letter I predicted in your tea-cup. It is black enough outside; I hope it is white within."

"It is from my cousin Pleasance!" said Estrild, seizing it eagerly.

"Is she a wholesome cousin, with a sound heart in her?" asked Carrie dubiously. "For my part, I should like to abolish cousins—they do a world of mischief. I am glad you have not been near Gilbert for nearly a week. I am very fond of him; but, for all that, I don't like a man to have dealings with the devil; and Tom is quite right in ordering me to keep away from him."

Estrild looked up for an instant from her letter.

"Superstition makes you cruel, Carrie."

"Superstition!" exclaimed Carrie. "Come, now, I admire that word from you, of all people!"

"You believe in tea-leaves and omens, and you have a dream-book at this moment in your pocket."

"Good healthy beliefs," said Carrie, blushing a little. "And has not the tea-leaves spoken truly? You have got your letter."

Estrild had turned the page of the second sheet of the large letter-paper; her face wore a deeper look of pain and grief than even these last weeks of anxiety and suspense had settled on it.

"Oh, Carrie, Harold must indeed be dead! There is no news of him or of Daniel at Langarth. The Curlew has returned, and Michael came to Pleasance as she was finishing her letter, and entreated her to ask me if I had heard from either of them. Carrie, how shall I live through this anguish of suspense? What shall I do—what can I do to solve this mystery?"

"Come with me and see Mary Armstrong," said Carrie. "She returned to London yesterday. There's a strong armful of help in that queer girl."

"See the daughter of the man who shielded an assassin! No, Carrie—I cannot do that."

"You would rather go to Gilbert and peep into the demon's looking-glass!" said Carrie, in anger. "Well, go if you like; you'll get no good by it. I told you there was a black spot in your letter; you ought to believe me more than you do him."

Carrie's superstition was all of the vulgar and commonplace order, and it never caused her discomfort, whereas the mysteries on which Gilbert touched filled her with horror.

"It is only a black spot," she continued, "and it will pass away. It's just mourning—that's all. My goodness, if Tom were dead, poor fellow, I should cry my eyes out; but I should wipe them at last and comfort myself. And that is what you ought to do."

Estrild was not listening. With dry eager eyes she was reading the details Pleasance gave—that Michael had given to her of Harold's last evening on board the Curlew. So now she knew it was for her sake he had risked his life, and perhaps lost it—for her sake he had ventured into some dreadful den in search of the assassin who had shot Tristram, and it was here maybe he had met his death. Or was it—could it be possible—that he had found in bondage by him and his companions?

Tormented by fear, doubt, and all the anguish of her great love, is it strange that, when a tiny messenger brought her a slip of paper on which was written, "Come to-night, when all is still—I shall be ready at one o'clock," her heart leaped thankfully, and she resolved to keep the appointment thus made? No thought of its imprudence struck her. She never thought of Gilbert or of herself; all her soul was fixed on Harold—she craved only for news of him, even from the occult and unknown world with which her soothsayer cousin dealt.

The household was asleep, silence reigned everywhere, save for the distant rumble of late wheels, when with beating heart and quiet step she sought her cousin's sitting-room.

A low fire was burning in the grate, a pungent odor filled the room, mingled with a light smoke like a faint cloud of incense.

Through this, as it appeared to her, Gilbert held out his hand to welcome her; but he did not speak.

On the contrary, he put his finger on his lip for silence and motioned her to a seat beside him.

Then she looked into his face and saw it attenuated and pale except for a hectic spot, as though a burning finger had touched him on either cheek. It was on her lips to say, "You have fasted horribly;" but she refrained, because of his continued gesture of silence.

On a small table before her stood a lamp, with its light lowered to dimness, and beside it lay the two crystals, and a slip of paper on which was written, "We must not speak until the experiment is over. Keep your nerve."

Estrild read this and bowed her head in grave acquiescence. She was conscious of no fear, but only of eager longing to see, to hear, to know.

Her right hand was still held fast in Gilbert's; his left hand passed over her face once, twice, thrice, and she fell into a dream—another phase of existence came upon her.

She was no longer in the close room with clouds of incense rising round and about her; she was on the deck of a ship in the midst of a calm sea, the blue of which seemed to glow in the blaze of a terrible sun.

Round about the gangway stood a small crowd with heads uncovered, and amidst them a shrouded figure lying prone and helpless, its every line dumbly, awfully proclaiming death.

Then, amid the stillness, to Estrild's ear a slight murmur arose, which gradually resolved itself into the sound of a single voice, faint and low, as though afar off, although she seemed to be standing among them close by the speaker, striving eagerly to look at the shrouded face of the dead man.

"We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body when the sea shall give up her dead."

Estrild saw the falling of the corpse into the waves; but she heard no more. A sound like the crash of thunder awoke her from her trance; she shrieked aloud. Gilbert had let go her hand, and was standing confronting his father in speechless terror. Mr. Vicat stood at the door, while he had flung open violently; his face was bloodless, and his eyes shone out of it bright with the fire of a vindictive triumph.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THIEVES' DISGUISES.

WHEN some years ago Charles Peace, perhaps the most famous English burglar of modern times, was brought to book, that part of his exposed career which caused the greatest astonishment was his marvellous ability to disguise his face. He was in the habit of using walnut juice to such an extent that his face became of a dark brown color, and closely resembled a half-caste's.

At the same time he could so protrude his lower jaw that his ordinary visage was most completely disguised, and anyone who had seen him in his burglar's dress could never by any chance have recognised him as the plain, honest-looking man who lived over the police station.

Peace had really lost three fingers, and to disguise this defect when burgling, he employed a hook of iron with a bamboo arm, which strapped on to his own arm from the elbow down.

With this, the fellow not only disguised himself, but he could lay hold of the top of a wall, or of a window sill, with no effort at all, and pull himself from the ground.

A recital of the devices of this extraordinary robber reminds us of the extraordinary pains many thieves have taken from time to time to disguise themselves. Contrary to common opinion, it is before and not after a burglary that those men so distort and disfigure their faces that the police cannot subsequently recognize them.

A moustache or beard is perhaps the commonest form of all disguises, and many a dark browed ruffian who peers into the plate basket, or helps himself to jewelry is wearing somebody else's hair.

There are men, however, who having themselves very light moustaches, disguise themselves the more effectually by working long hairs of a different color upon this natural foundation.

They twist this hair on with beeswax or gum, and when the operation is completed they give themselves the air of a gentleman whose mission is fighting or merely killing time.

It is astonishing to note how small a thing is sometimes effectual as a disguise. Thus every artist knows that one of the strongest marks of a good portrait is a correct line of the eyebrow.

The burglar is quite artistic enough to appreciate a knowledge of this fact, and one of his first cares in making up is either to arch the brow or make it square. He will also dye the hair of the eyebrows, so that if he is a dark man he will have a white brow, and if he has no brows at all he will give himself such dark and heavy ones that his intimate friends would hardly know him.

Any of our readers who do not quite appreciate the value as a disguise of a distorted eyebrow, we would ask to take a portrait of any person they know and just to pencil the brows in a different direction to that in which nature has placed them. The effect of the change is really marvellous.

Next to the eyebrows, a very marked change in a man can be effected by the means of an alteration of the shoulder line. Thus a professional thief can alter the height of his shoulders so that he appears an old or a young man in contradiction to his natural age.

A detective tells us that he once knew a case where many robberies were committed from halls and kitchens. He at length got a clue, but all the evidence tended to show was that the pilferer was a finely-built, though short man, apparently about thirty years of age.

After some weeks work he traced this fellow to a certain house, but, though he watched the house day and night, he could never spot his man. The result of all his inquiries pointed only to the fact that a little wizen-faced man lived there who was also a hunchback.

Spotting this hunchback one day, the man thought that under his bronzed features he could detect a suspicion of similarity to the man he wanted. He therefore followed him, and after looking at his back for some minutes came to the conclusion that the hump was not in the centre.

His curiosity was aroused; the more so when he noticed that the further the man walked the further the hump tended to get over to his left shoulder.

The conviction soon became a certainty that the thing was a forgery and seizing the rascal by both his shoulders, he put his foot in the centre of his centre of his back and strengthened him up. The hump proved to be only a bundle of rags in a canvas bag which was constructed with wires to give it a proper shape.

In addition to such disguises as we have mentioned, a man frequently adds to the distortion of his face by putting two very thin wires behind his ears, so that the latter stand out well from his head.

This in conjunction with a false nose and a protruding jaw is a capital deception. In fact, as Peace proved, the art of the mimic and the facialist, as carried to perfection by skilful burglars, is not surpassed by many a professional actor.

The clothes of thieves are not often very serviceable for good disguise.

Many hundreds of dollars have certainly been collected from time to time by means of clerical garments, but the dodge is rapidly becoming old-fashioned, and few skilful workmen adopt it.

We may remember the story of the burglar, however, who escaped from New York and encountered an elderly clergyman in the train.

Pulling out a revolver he demanded, on pain of instant death, that the preacher should change clothes with him, and the detectives at the stopping place naturally arrested the latter innocent person, and were some hours before they were convinced that they had the wrong man.

THE BABY'S BALL.—A ball is the very thing for the baby. One that the little one can easily catch and hold is made of zephyr in this wise: Take two circular pieces of cardboard, say two inches in diameter, cut a hole in the centre an inch or so in diameter. Then with the zephyrs doubled and a worsted needle proceed to sew over and over the cardboard circle until the opening in the centre shall be filled; then with a pair of sharp scissors cut the zephyr at the outside edge, pull the pieces of cardboard a little apart and tie a strong cord firmly between them. Then pull them out, and trim off the rough ends of the wool to make the ball smooth and velvety.

THE END.

BY C. C. BINGHAM.

You were standing alone in the silence,
When I passed down the stair that night,
Alone with your thoughts in the shadow,
Away from the fire's soft light;

And never a greeting you gave me,
Not a word your lips let fall,
As I came from the light to your side, dear,
That night, in the old oak hall!

But I knew, ah, so well, the secret
You fancied you kept unseen,
And I hated the pride that was standing
Like a shadow our hearts between.

So I told you, that night, a story,
And you listened as in a spell,
Till I saw that you guessed the meaning
Of the story I tried to tell!

And the shadow passed by from between us,
For ever, beyond recall,
As you whispered the end of the story
That night, in the old oak hall!

"ON TRIAL."

BY PHYLLIS.

CHAPTER II.

WITH her? Inadequate explanation! He was on his knees to her!

Elston felt his color forsake him; his breath come and go with difficulty; his limbs tremble beneath him—as he took in the fatal scene.

Yes! There he was, kneeling before her, a whole world of despairing love in his eloquent eyes, now more aglow than ever. He was holding her hand in both of his in quite a frenzied fashion, and, even as Elston gazed, spellbound, he proceeded to devour it with kisses!

Ah, she! perfidious girl! How did she receive his insolent advances? With the withering scorn they deserved? With a gesture of hatred and aversion? No! She turned her head coyly to one side and permitted him without rebuke to press the lovely hand upon which he—Elston—only a minute since had been tenderly dwelling, as upon a priceless treasure that yet some day might be his.

There was a curious expression, too, upon her false face, as though she were waiting with a girlish bashfulness for a word from him that should decide her fate.

It came at last. Not one, but many words in a very torrent of wild entreaty.

"My beloved! My most adored one!" cried he, in tones loud and clear; remarkably so indeed—no doubt on account of the intensity of his emotion. "Do not consign me to despair—and an early grave. A single word of hope is all I dare demand. Grant it, ere I perish. To-morrow will see me over the border: let me take with me into my enforced exile one smile, one blessed assurance that you are not altogether indifferent to me!"

He waited her reply in apparently breathless suspense. So did Elston. Slowly—very slowly, she pressed her handkerchief to her averted face.

"If I only dared believe you would be true," she faltered, very distinctly.

Elston stayed to hear no more. Stricken, crushed by this perfidy, in one he had esteemed so highly, he turned his steps backward and went blindly down the path by which he had ascended—to his doom. He scarce knew whither he went.

On and on he walked through the shady garden, until at last he came to a high stone wall—only recognizing that, indeed, when his nose came nearly in contact with it. He could not go through it and it was impossible to climb it, so perforce he pulled himself up and began to retrace his steps.

This he did, still in a blind fury of rage and grief, that burst into open flame as a turn in a path brought him suddenly face to face with Sophy.

She was coming towards him and was singing, actually singing, in a blithe, sweet, careless way, a new ballad that had taken her fancy of late.

With one hand she was holding up her gown—in the other was a big red rose that she was swinging lightly to and fro. She looked like one who was without a care in the whole world—or a regret—or a remorse.

One could see her dainty feet in their Parisian shoes and hear the click-clack of the high heels, as she tripped down the little hilly pathway.

She seemed indeed at the moment the very incarnation of all sweetness and light. When she saw Elston she stopped singing and smiled instead.

"You here! And at this hour!" cried she. "Traitor! Have you found me out then?"

Such hardihood! Such effrontery.

"Yes. And in time," returned he, standing still and gazing at her with concentrated wrath on his pale face.

Then his anger burst all bounds. "How do you dare to speak to me?" he said in a low but terrible tone. Miss Charteris drew back.

"What on earth has happened? Are you mad?" she said.

"Sane rather—at last. This morning I was mad indeed. Then, I believed in you. Now——"

He threw out his hand with a gesture that would have done credit to the tragic young man himself.

"Now—I know all."

"It seems to be a good deal," remarked Miss Charteris composedly, though her face had lost its color. "It is also evidently of much interest. May I hear it?"

"This persistent deception is unworthy—nay, rather, worthy of you," cried he, bitterly. "Learn then that just now I saw you and—and that mountebank in the glass house above."

"I don't know any mountebank. I am therefore more at sea than ever."

As she said this in her iciest tones, his lordship regarded her with undisguised disdain.

"You know one at all events," he said. "His name is Pelham."

Then his rage broke forth again.

"I tell you I saw him on his knees to you—swearing, protesting, how he loved you; whilst you—you—listened to him, you encouraged him. I did not wait for the end, but your manner left me no doubt that you accepted him."

Miss Charteris struggled with herself for a moment and then burst out laughing. There was a good deal of irrepressible amusement in this laughter, but there was more anger.

"I see," she said. "And so you think you surprised Captain Pelham making love to me? Now listen——" she dropped her rose, and drawing a little paper volume from her pocket, opened it with much deliberation at a certain page, and began to read out aloud:

"My beloved! My most adored one! Do not consign me to despair——" and so on to the end of what he had heard behind the laurel hedge.

As she proceeded, his face changed. First it grew blank, then crimson. Then a wild hope sprang into it that had to do battle with a great shame.

When Miss Charteris had finished to the last word, she paused, folded the play with irritating precision, and returned it to her pocket.

"You have done me and Captain Pelham much honor," she said, coolly. "It is certain that in your eyes at least, we shall pass muster as very tolerable actors."

She swept him as she spoke and went on her way to the gate beyond, cruelly unconcerned in manner.

She even took up and continued the song she had been singing, from the very part where she had broken off. She was in no wise disconcerted or put out. This indifference was terrible.

He hurried after her and caught her up just under the hanging ivy of the gateway.

"One word," he entreated, miserably. "You gave me three chances. You remember that?"

"Yes. I also remember that two of them are at an end."

"Oh, no. That first one, it has not been proved unreasonable."

"I told you not to depend too much on that. On Thursday next you shall see that objectionable letter."

She would barely look at him, and his heart sank. If she could show him that letter, there must indeed have been nothing in it to justify his jealousy. Still there was one more chance left him. He took courage.

"You blame me," he said, in a low voice. "But you might know that if I did not love you as I do, you would not have to blame me. I pray you to remember that."

She made him no answer to this, beyond a swift glance he found it difficult to translate; and a moment later she had passed through the little ivied gate into the flower-garden beyond, and he had not then the courage to follow her.

He stayed behind, therefore, and upbraided himself fiercely. He took himself to task in a shower of genuine abuse.

He absented himself from luncheon; and at dinner it took him quite a little time to make up his mind about even glancing at her when he found her on his other side. He did manage it, however, and looked so long, that she was at length obliged to notice him.

After that, touched perhaps by the unhappiness of his eyes, she softened towards him, and to his intense surprise and gratitude was considerably kinder than he deserved.

The next day went smoothly, without a single hitch; and if at eleven o'clock he winced inwardly as he thought of the two who were then in all probability amongst the pelargoniums, he was very careful not to betray it.

He was happier, too, in spite of all this than he had been for some time. Miss Charteris towards evening grew very nearly her old sweet self again. Nay, more than that.

It seemed to Elston that she was softer, tenderer in her manner to him than she had ever been before; that her eyes rested on his with a more lingering regard; and once, when he unexpectedly turned his glance in her direction, he caught her looking at him, and surprised the vivid blush with which she turned aside.

His hopes rose high, and he came downstairs next morning, Wednesday, happy in the knowledge that only one more day lay between him and the fulfilment of his fondest desire.

Certainly that third sin should not find him out, for the simple reason that he would not commit it.

He would be calm, circumspect. It was, indeed, impossible that he should ever feel jealousy about her again.

It was perhaps a little shock to him to find George Markham at breakfast when he got down. He had arrived by an early train, and as Elston entered the room, was just saying "How d'ye do" to Miss Charteris.

She was a girl who spoke very distinctly, and Elston could hear what she was saying. She was smiling in very friendly wise at Markham, though her manner was suspiciously reproachful.

"I thought you were never coming," she said. "How you put it from day to day. And when you know why I wanted you."

After that, she and Markham entered into, and were apparently lost in, an engrossing discussion that lasted until breakfast, a rather prolonged meal at Hartley, was at an end.

Lord Elston could not forget that once this man had been Sophy's avowed lover. He had, according to all accounts, been her devoted slave.

He looked uncommonly like a slave still—following her about and giving himself up to her, as it were, for the entire morning.

Pelham, in spite of his expression and tragic powers, was nowhere. Markham monopolised her all through, getting her to show him the new fish-pond and tennis court and otherwise making himself specially unpleasant.

Miss Charteris, however, did not seem to find him unpleasant at all. She seemed, on the whole, very glad to be with him. She introduced him to Elston with quite a little flow of pleasure in her manner, and said ecstatically that it was "very nice to see two old friends of hers with each other."

This was putting Markham in the same category with himself—when surely he, Elston, was more than a friend.

Feeling rather disconsolate after luncheon he broke away from one or two of the other guests, who wanted him to join them in a long drive to some distant abbey, and, lighting a cigarette, wandered into one of the conservatories.

Sophy, he had discovered, was not going to this abbey, neither was Markham—a fact in itself suspicious.

He was feeling distinctly gloomy as he stepped into the region of flowers, and, without giving a thought to their beauty, paced slowly up and down. It was at his second turn that his eyes, moodily lowered to the ground, fell upon an object that instantly riveted all his attention.

A letter, wide open, and written in a large, sprawling hand. The beginning was at the other side, of course, but what now caught his eye was enough.

"a moment sooner. Hurried my best. But those lawyer fellows are impossible to move. I will bring the ring, but only hope it isn't too large. It looks enormous. However, as it is my first purchase of the kind, you must forgive me if I have erred in any way. Ever, dear Sophy, yours, G. Markham."

The writing was so large that he read it from where he stood. He read it unconsciously. His eyes had fallen upon it and, before he was aware of it, the sense of the words had entered into his brain. What was he to do now!

He was a little frightened at the strange feeling that took possession of him. It was not rage, or grief, or disappointment. It was something far worse than all. He hardly realised at first that it was despair.

"Lawyers." He wondered dimly if it were her marriage settlement they were so slow about. "His first purchase of the kind."

Very natural. It isn't every day a man buys a wedding-ring. He hadn't a doubt in his mind but that it was a wedding-ring to be placed on Sophy's finger by Markham.

He was not angry this time. He was only cold and stunned. For the first time in all his life he was entirely without hope. He wondered in a dull sort of way that he had never until now discovered how much Sophy was to him.

He was still staring at the cruel letter, though with eyes that saw not, when Sophy herself entered the conservatory. Of course she saw the letter, and instantly stooped to to pick it up.

"I seem to be dropping my possessions all over the place," she said. "My Syrian bangle in the garden half an hour a—Good gracious! What is the matter now?"

She had caught a glimpse of Elston's face, and it electrified her. Indeed it made a picture.

"Don't let us go into it, Sophy," he said, brokenly. "Why should I distress you? It was all my own folly from first to last, I daresay. I should have seen—have known——"

"But what?" demanded she, as he paused; he felt unequal to going on, and looked so altogether strange and downhearted that Miss Charteris was unnerved. "What was it? Tell," she said.

He pointed to the letter she still held in her hand.

"If you had only told me," he cried. "Oh, Sophy! was it then so great an amusement to you to break my heart!"

"To break——"

She gazed at him, lost in perplexity. Vaguely her eyes wandered to the letter, the word "ring" caught her eye; in a moment the whole truth flashed upon her. A warm crimson sprang to her cheek, and I regret to say she so far forgot herself as to stamp her pretty shoe upon the tesselated pavement.

"You are really maddening!" she cried. "You are beyond pardon."

She might, and in all probability would, have said a great deal more, had not the sound of an approaching footstep checked her. She turned her head to see George Markham.

"George," she said, sweetly, with a change of tone and expression. "Would you mind bringing me that—that little message I wrote to you about last Thursday. Bring it here. Lady Hartley has it, I think. Get it from her."

"Oh, the ring," said Mr. Markham; and he went back again the way he had come, whistling idly. Miss Charteris, in his absence, employed herself thrumming in a rather vicious manner upon the pane nearest to her.

She did not look at Elston, who was deadly silent, with an awful growing fear full upon him that he had been for the third, and fatal time, mistaken!

Presently Markham returned and laid something in her hand.

"I had a battle royal to get it," he said, laughing. "It appears baby lives by it alone. It is a huge success, Lady Hartley says, 'an you love her, don't keep it long.'"

Still laughing, he lounged away, through the outer door, down the steps and into the garden.

When he was quite gone, Sophy advanced on Lord Elston. She then opened her pretty pink palm and held it out to him. A curious object lay on it.

"There is the ring!" she said, in a voice untranslatable.

It was a terrible thing. A hateful wormy sort of thing, made of gutta-percha; but if hideous, at least innocent—innocent, no doubt, because hideous.

It was black and soft and bendable, and big enough to fit a giant's thumb. Elston gazed at it as if fascinated, and at last, in spite of the pride that would have held him silent, was constrained to speak.

"What is it?"

"Baby's teething-ring," returned she, slowly.

When she had proved to him his guilt, she did not try to leave him, but stood erect, her beautiful figure drawn up to its fullest height, a strange gravity upon her beautiful lips.

"This is the third time," she said, at last, in a low tone, as though speaking to herself.

He started violently. Noticing this, she let her eyes rest more fully on him and went on slowly, "Your probation, my Lord, is at an end."

"So is my life," said he.

"As for that first chance—that letter of mine—you shall see it now, as I have promised."

"Oh! no, no," he said, entreating her by a gesture not to go into that. "I understand. I submit. I am surely unfortunate enough."

She hesitated for a moment and then said:

"You remember our compact?"

"And all it means to me. Have I not told you so? Spare me, I beseech you, what you can."

"This is the final throw and you have lost."

"Everything?"

"All is over, then, between us?"

"All!"

She made a little impetuous movement, and he, interpreting it, moved to the door and flung it wide for her to pass through. With her would go all his hopes, his desires. Nothing would remain save that saddest of all things, memory.

He stood, his eyes downcast, waiting for her to go. He felt numbed, stupid; but presently it did dawn upon him that it was strange she should keep him so long in attendance on her. Whilst he thus mused, a voice, soft, sweet, unsteady, fell upon his ears.

"Arthur!" it said.

He let the door go and looked at her. She had covered her face with her hands and was crying quietly but bitterly. In a second she was in his arms.

"My darling! my darling!" he whispered he. "Has it hurt you so much? Has it so grieved you? Oh, Sophy, do not cry like that! In time you will forget all this and—me."

"Ah! that is just it," sobbed Miss Charteris, indignantly; "I can't forget you. And to think you would have let me go forever, without another word—another glance—oh, I would not have believed it of you!"

"Sophy, do you know what you are saying? After all, is there a chance for me?"

He was very pale as he looked at her.

"Yes, a fourth," said she, smiling through her tears. "And then—oh, no," she cried, nervously, "we won't have any more trials. I hate them. But you will try to be good now, won't you?"

"I don't think I shall ever offend you again, Sophy; I don't, indeed."

"Very well," said she. "That is a promise, mind; and now I must run away and give back this ring to Lady Hartley."

"Ah! talking of rings," said he, a little awkwardly; "there is something I want to say to you. On Thursday last I was so sure I should not fall into disgrace that I telegraphed to town, and," fumbling in his pocket, "got you this. You will wear it now, Sophy?"

This was a very exquisite ring, altogether different from that horrid thing which had wrought such mischief.

"Oh! how lovely!" cried Miss Charteris, who was not above raptures where diamonds were concerned. "Oh, Arthur, thank you!"

He slipped it on her finger—the finger—and she regarded it with most satisfactory delight.

"It is I who should thank you," said he, tenderly, "for deigning to accept it. But if I were to thank a person, Sophy, I should do it more warmly than you."

She cast a little, swift, shy glance at him

and blushed crimson. She hesitated, then moved a step nearer to him, and lifted her face slightly.

It was their first kiss, but not their last.

[THE END.]

A Basket of Fish.

BY H. D.

"I SHALL be home to dinner at seven, sharp," said Neil Rossiter, giving a caressing pat to the fair hair of his young wife, as she bent her head over the button she was sewing on his glove. "And you might have a bit of fish, Mamie; soles, or a small turbot, if not too dear."

She looked up surprised.

"But why, Neil? You are not fond of either. Have you asked anyone to come home with you? Do tell me, for cook hates to be taken at what she calls an ampitish."

"Well, dear, I met Bosley at the Exchange yesterday," Mr. Rossiter replied, rather hesitatingly. "We hadn't seen each other for months. Both were too much pressed for time to say more than 'How d'ye do?' so I asked him to dine with us this evening; then we can have a cigar and a chat — business chat, you know — afterwards."

Mrs. Rossiter snapped the thread she had been winding round the button, and, without replying, walked away to restore her needle and thimble to their places in her workbox.

But her husband followed her to bestow a parting caress.

"Good-bye—good-bye; don't stop indoors this lovely morning. If it is as fine to-morrow I'll try to get away from the city early enough to take you as far as Battersea Park; they say the flowers there are in their prime. How is it, Mamie, you never have liked poor Bosley? He is one of the steadiest, most sensible fellows of my acquaintance, and admires you immensely. The last time he was here—but I shan't make you vain by repeating what he said."

"I do not actually dislike Mr. Bosley," said little Mrs. Rossiter, dimpling and blushing. "I believe he is all you call him, only—only——"

"You have prejudiced yourself against him, and do not know why," cried Neil, finishing her sentence for her.

"Yes, I am afraid it is prejudice," she admitted, "but I do know why. It is because the sight of him always revives unpleasant recollections."

Her husband laughed although he looked annoyed.

"And all this because Bosley happened to be with me at St. Leonards before our marriage, at the time I offended you by taking two walks and spending one wet afternoon with pretty Mrs. Ferguson."

"You flirted with her desperately, sir, I am sure you did; and it was Mr. Bosley who introduced you to her, although he must have known you and I were on the eve of an engagement."

"When Mrs. Ferguson met us in the White Rock library, and asked him point-blank to do so, how could he refuse? But is it any use going over this old story? You knew then as you know now, that I love you with all my heart and soul. Isn't it high time you forgot all my fancied sins against you?"

"It is not so easily done with Mrs. Ferguson living within a stone's throw of us, and crossing my path so frequently," retorted Mamie, sticking the needle into its cushion with a vicious stab.

"If you are going to make a grievance of that we will remove to the other side of London; and if I am asked why, what shall I say? That my wife is jealous—absurdly, causelessly so."

"I am not jealous, sir," Mrs. Rossiter protested. "It is only that I—I hate the woman, and I want to forget her, but something is always occurring to prevent it."

There was no reply, for Neil Rossiter had snatched up the mended gloves and was striding away, with his lips so sternly compressed that his wife repented and ran after him, and would not let him go till she had won forgiveness for her foolish little speeches.

He was easily conciliated, even to the length of tingering a while in the garden for the best rose it contained to be plucked and pinned in his button-hole.

Mamie accompanied him to the gate, stopping under the clematis trained over it, to watch him till he turned the first corner.

But a few steps, and Neil came back to say, with tender anxiety:

"Don't forget to have a walk. You need not hinder yourself to go shopping. I will call at the new fishmonger's in the High Street before I take an omnibus."

With this understanding they parted, and Mrs. Rossiter went slowly into the house, vexed with herself for the weakness she had betrayed.

It was a fact undeniable that pretty Mrs. Ferguson, although blessed with an excellent husband, to whom she was attached, was one of those women whose love of admiration leads them into all sorts of follies.

"But I have no reason to fear her now," Mamie told herself, exultingly. "I do not believe that she could obtain any influence over Neil, fascinating though everyone acknowledges her to be; and I really will not annoy him with any more silly allusions to the past. I will be so civil to Mr. Bosley this evening that Neil will see I have quite conquered my prejudices."

Mrs. Rossiter did not forget her husband's injunction, and after a colloquy with her cook, and filling the vases with fresh flowers, and arranging the dessert, she took a long, brisk walk, coming back at mid-day in the best of spirits, and prepared to enjoy her simple luncheon.

But as she drew near her own house, she began to feel doubtful whether Neil had remembered his promise to call at the fishmonger's.

He was apt to be somewhat oblivious of such promises as soon as he turned his face cityward.

Then the business of the day became paramount in his mind to the exclusion of all else.

Anyhow, it would be just as well to walk as far as Dorey's, and satisfy herself that the order had been given, and accordingly thither Mamie went.

Mr. Dorey, who, red-faced and hoarse with much talking, was serving half a dozen customers, and giving half a dozen orders all at once, let a huge eel slip back into the pan where it had been wriggling, and came to make his bow to the charming little lady who paused at the door.

"Has Mr. Rossiter called and ordered some fish?"

"Yes, ma'am, he have. I've just put it into a basket myself. There it is, ma'am; it shall be sent off instanter."

Instinctively Mrs. Rossiter glanced in the direction to which he was pointing, and saw that the label on the basket, though in her husband's writing, was not addressed to herself.

She drew her hand over her eyes and then looked again.

No, it was not her fancy; it was not the freak of a disordered brain, there, in too bold, decided characters she knew so well, she saw the words:

"Ordered by N. Rossiter. To be sent to Mrs. Ferguson, 17, Glenbervill Terrace, St. Aidan's Road."

Afraid to speak, lest she should burst into tears of rage, Mamie Rossiter hastily quitted the shop and walked away, not caring in what direction she went, till she found herself at a considerable distance from her own home.

"I will never go back to it!" she vehemently declared, in the first tumults of her passion. "Neil has been deceiving me; keeping up an intimacy with this woman; sending her presents, and paying her visits of course; which I, poor trusting simpleton, have never suspected! Oh! how could he be so cruel, so wicked! I wish I could die and escape my misery. I cannot live with him now; and how can I ever be happy again?"

Then she determined to go direct to her widowed mother, whose home was at Carlisle; and was on her way to Euston Square before she recollected that such a journey could not be undertaken without money, and her purse was in the pocket of another dress.

In spite of her unwillingness to return to the house where, till now, she had dwelt in such happy security, a loving, and apparently beloved wife, it was an absolute necessity.

Moreover, she was beginning to feel a very feminine longing to upbraid her treacherous husband, and convince him of his guilt before she bade him farewell for ever.

But she had wandered so far away, that when she reached her own door, the servant who opened it cried out in alarm at her ghastly looks and exhausted condition.

With cook's assistance she was supported to a sofa, where she lay struggling with faintness and hysteria, till the frightened women began to ask each other if it would not be prudent to fetch the nearest medical man.

This, however, Mrs. Rossiter contrived to find voice enough to forbid.

She had walked too far, and lost herself, she told them. She would have some tea, and go and lie down.

Leaning on the stout arm of the housemaid, she dragged herself upstairs to her own room, submitted to be undressed and to swallow a nostrum prescribed by cook, then begged to be left to herself.

"When Mr. Rossiter comes in tell him I have a wretched headache, and am trying to sleep it off. On no account must he disturb me."

To enforce this command she slid off the bed as soon as her servants left her, turned the key in the door, and slipped the bolt in the one leading to the dressing-room where Neil kept his evening-suit and shaving apparatus, and enjoyed his morning ablutions.

This done, she lay down again, not to sleep, but to rest her aching limbs, and gather strength for the long journey of the morrow.

* * * * * *

Presently she heard her husband's voice, and by the fall of other footsteps besides his own she knew that Mr. Bosley had accompanied him.

As they entered the house Neil laughed at some remark made by his friend, and his wife shivered at the sound.

Then there was a sudden hush, broken only by the shriller tones of Sarah, who, in a half-whisper, was explaining why her mistress did not appear.

The next minute Neil Rossiter was turning the handle of his wife's door, and tapping, but very softly, for admission.

After waiting awhile, he went away, satisfied that she was sleeping; and Mamie heard him cautiously moving about his dressing-room, not whistling or humming some lively tune, as was his wont, and suddenly recalling how happy they had been together, she buried her head in her pillows, and sobbed till the bed shook with the violence of her emotion.

Mr. Bosley, seeing that his host was rendered very uneasy by the illness of his wife, had the good sense to make his stay a brief one.

As soon after the cloth was cleared as he could decently do so, he pleaded an appointment, and departed, promising to call on the morrow, when he hoped to find Mrs. Rossiter quite recovered.

Not at all sorry to be rid of a guest he was not in spirits to entertain, Neil had no sooner bid him adieu than he ran upstairs again to ascertain whether Mamie was awake.

This time the door yielded when he tried it, and on entering the room he found his wife up and dressed.

Her face was crimson with excitement, her eyes swollen with weeping, and she was engaged in transferring to some trunks the contents of her drawers.

"Had she suddenly lost her senses?" debated the amazed husband as he went towards her, only to be passionately repulsed.

"Do not touch me! do not attempt to come near me!" she exclaimed. "I have found you out! I have discovered how false, how unfaithful you are, and this is the last night I shall spend under your roof!"

"You foolish little woman, you are feverish!" exclaimed the astonished Neil. "What made you overtire yourself? Or you have been asleep and dreaming. Come and sit on my knee and tell me——"

But with a cry of agony she beat down the arms that would have enfolded her, and, seeing that she was suffering from great mental distress, he strove by quiet expostulations to calm her.

"You are angry with me, Mamie, strangely, unreasonably angry, and seem to forget that I am quite in ignorance of the cause of it. Tell me of what I am supposed to be guilty."

"That you may pooh-pooh it, or try, by some plausible excuse, to hoodwink me. No, you cannot do this now. I shall never be so easily duped again—never!"

"Am I not to be heard in my own defence? Is this your idea of woman's justice? Still I demand to know the nature of the crime I am said to have committed."

"Said to have committed!" Mrs. Rossiter repeated, with heaving bosom. "Are your ideas of right and duty so lax, that you do not look upon it as a sin to keep up a secret intimacy with that vilest of women—that Mrs. Ferguson?"

Neil Rossiter's face became very grave.

"Hush! I cannot let you say a word against her. Who has been filling your mind with such atrocious trash?"

"No one; what I have learned, I have discovered myself."

"Indeed! Will you tell me now? Yes, Mamie, I insist upon it. You seem to be making preparations for leaving me, but out of this room you shall not stir till you have told me the reason you are acting so madly."

She pressed her fingers to her beating temples.

"Yes, I am mad; I have been mad ever since I went to Dorey's this morning. It was there—it was there I learnt your treachery."

And then, by dint of a little questioning, Neil Rossiter elicited the rest.

As soon as he heard his wife's story he ran downstairs, snatched up his hat, and quitted the house.

Was it because he saw himself detected, and had no excuse to offer for his conduct?

Slowly and sadly, her tears dropping on the garments made not so very long since for her bridal, Mrs. Rossiter resumed her task of packing, stopping ever and anon to fling down some pretty trifle Neil had given her, and cry those bitter, hopeless tears that had never visited her blue eyes before.

Her life was blighted; all those sweet hopes she had been cherishing were crushed.

If she became the mother of a living child, how could she rear that child to love and reverence a father from whom her self-respect compelled her to separate?

And all this unhappiness arose from the mischievous coquettishness of a thoughtless, heartless woman, who exercised her witcheries on everyone who came near!

Again poor Mamie's head sank on her hands, and she was sitting on the floor oblivious of everything but her grief, when her husband returned to her.

He held out the label she had seen at the fishmonger's.

"Here is the cause of all your trouble, my too hasty wife, and now hear the explanation."

Mamie shook her head and turned from him.

"Just as I reached Dorey's shop this morning I met Dr. Finniss, and he stopped to speak to me. He had just come from the death-bed of Mrs. Ferguson. You start—you look incredulous, but it is too true. She has died of heart disease after an illness of a few hours. Knowing how young she was, and how fondly loved, in spite of her faults, by her husband and friends, I felt so much shocked, that for the next hour I was like one in a dream. I did your errand, faithfully as I thought, but here is a proof that, in the confusion of my mind, I wrote, without knowing it, the wrong address."

Mrs. Ferguson dead!

Mamie clasped her arms about her husband's knees in a paroxysm of mingled shame for her injustice and relief.

Forgiveness was earnestly and soon accorded, but she was very ill for some days in consequence of the agitation and fatigue she had undergone.

Need we say that no allusions are ever made to that basket of fish, and that Neil Rossiter's wife is quite cured of unfounded jealousy?

Scientific and Useful.

NEW SCREW-DRIVER.—A new screw-driver acts upon the same principle as a stem-watch. A stop-pin and pawl limit the movement of the shank in one direction, while the handle will move backwards without moving the shank.

SILVER AND GOLD.—Silver may be dissolved in nitric acid, and again reduced to a metallic state by adding copper, after removing excess of moisture by evaporation. Gold can be dissolved in warm nitric-muriatic acid, and it may be recovered or reduced to a metallic state by precipitating with copperas and then melting the precipitate in a crucible.

PINE NEEDLES.—A powder of pine needles is now prepared in Germany, and is becoming popular for use in baths. A half pound or a pound of the powder is allowed to dissolve in lukewarm water for a few minutes, when the bath is ready. The principles extracted act upon the skin as a tonic and antiseptic, and the baths are prescribed for rheumatic complaints, gout, certain skin diseases, and for invigorating the system generally. The powder is also used for fumigations in chest affections, etc., or as an antiseptic a little may be placed on a hot shovel and carried about the room.

MENDING IRON POTS.—To make a cement to mend iron pots and pans: Take two parts of sulphur and one part, by weight, of fine black lead; put the sulphur in an old iron pan, holding it over the fire until it shall begin to melt, then add the lead; stir well until all is mixed and melted; then pour out on an iron plate or a smooth stone. When cool, break into small pieces. A sufficient quantity of this compound being placed upon the crack of the iron pot to be mended, can be soldered in the same way that a tinsmith solders his sheets. If there be a small hole in the pot, drive a copper rivet in it and then solder over it with this cement.

SALT IN BUILDING.—One of the new building materials which is likely to be found useful in many ways is common salt. Among the carpenters salt is now found to be useful as an aid to the heating of glue. Where, as is usual in joiners' and cabinet-makers' shops, the glue is melted in a jacket-kettle, surrounded by water, it is said to be advisable to put salt in the water in the outer kettle. The addition of salt raises the boiling point, and, therefore allows the glue in the kettle to be kept at a higher temperature than could be maintained with water alone, and this is advantageous to the work. The masons find their use for salt in adding it to cement mortar in cold weather, to preserve it from the bad effects of freezing.

Farm and Garden.

SMALL PENS.—It is the opinion of the most experienced pig-growers, that small pens, in sufficient number to accommodate the herd, are preferable to one large one. Even the yards they run in should be small, with a limited number of pigs in each.

NEW TREES.—See about a few choice new trees. Set a grove of maples, or chestnuts, or walnuts. The trees will be profitable as well as beautiful. Every year fill up vacancies as they occur in your orchards. It is the only way to keep fruit profitably.

DOGS AND SHEEP.—It is a fact that dogs seldom attack sheep kept with cattle, unless in the case of some old rogue, and then only when the sheep are found at a considerable distance, for the instinct of the cattle is to attack animals found chasing or worrying other stock near them.

THE SILO.—The silo put into use in the West, would save, at a small cost, all the millions of tons of corn-stalks now left to waste, which would provide acceptable and nutritious feeding for the winter, instead of being a source of disease, and loss of thousands of cattle that have little or no other subsistence.

RAMS AND EWES.—A French breeder says that by putting his rams in the prime of life to old ewes in the decline of life, he never failed to get a large proportion of ram lambs. When he coupled ewes in the prime and vigor of life with ram lambs before they were matured, he got a large proportion of ewe lambs.

TOO MUCH STOCK.—There is no benefit in keeping too much stock. Runts, stunted animals, or those that seem to eat all they can get, without gaining in size, should be got rid of. Many losses occur from keeping unprofitable stock on hand too long. An animal that does not show the effects of good treatment in a few weeks, will be no better in as many months.

SHEEP.—Sheep that are kept on the old pasture-fields, should be driven to the barn-yard before a storm, as dampness is injurious. It is almost impossible for sheep to find a sufficiency of food when the snow is on the ground, and they suffer from lack of shelter in the fields. Yet there are many farmers who turn the sheep out to support themselves, and such a system is one that always leads to loss.

CROSSES.—There are some crosses that do not result to the best advantage. With dogs it is claimed that the union of a hairy with a smooth-coated dog will produce a worthless offspring, and with poultry the crossing of birds with rose-combs and single combs has not been productive of such good results as when single-comb breeds have been bred together as crosses. Experiments in this direction are worthy of attention.

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We would direct the attention of our friends and readers to the *marked reduction in our club rates* as given above, and respectfully ask those who are in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST to enter the field soon as possible and try to increase their lists.

We are hoping to get a great many good sized clubs for the coming year, and trust every one of our subscribers and readers will make an effort to send one. We make it easy for you to do so, for we have *reduced the club rates* to such a figure as to place THE POST within the reach of all, and it will require but a little effort on the part of any one to secure enough subscribers at the very low rates we offer to make a club.

Just think of it, 10 copies of THE POST *one year, with an extra copy for getter-up of club, making 11 copies for $10.*

You can, dear reader, without much trouble, get ten persons to take THE POST at one dollar per year and thereby secure a copy free for yourself.

If you cannot obtain a club of ten, we hope you will try and get a few subscribers and secure the rates which are offered for a less number.

THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get a few new subscribers at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

The Quality of Pride.

Pride is the most flattering of human passions. It never loses its vivacity, except in moments of melancholy and paying out money. Diogenes, under cover of his tub, may prate about the virtues of lowliness; Mark Antony may let envy sting him into eloquence on the beauty of humility, but nothing will prevent man from admiring his own feathers in that mirror of perfection—himself.

While pride joined with uncommon talent does not prevent esteem, pride, unaccompanied by ability, excites ridicule, contempt and hatred. Men may object to have their heads cudgelled, but the smart is less keen when the cudgelling is done by a Napoleon or a Washington. Men may resent being silenced, but the resentment is tempered when the thunder is a Johnson's. On the other hand, when Smith or Jones tries to overwhelm us with his stolen thunder or with his feeble tin-kettle imitation, we resent his arrogance.

If Smith is our social inferior, we cover him with ridicule; if he is our equal, we treat him with contempt; if he is our superior, we regard him with hatred. There is a term that describes these Smiths and Joneses of our acquaintance. It is the word "Snob," which, according to Thackeray, means one who "admires mean things meanly."

There is another sort of pride which is even more offensive than that of the snob. It is the pride that apes humility. From the effects of this pride it is difficult to escape. It comes upon us under the guise of a candid friend, and not as an enemy whom we can meet openly.

Every one has met the man who struts through the world, exclaiming, at the top of his voice, "There's no pride about me!" He usually adds to the boast the interesting information that he is "self-made," and is invariably oblivious of the fact that there may be two opinions as to the quality of his work. He speaks in capital letters and writes in italics. He is rude and unpolished, and makes the absence of veneer an excuse for setting before us certain failings with a brutal frankness that we resent all the more because we do not care to acknowledge that he is right.

But this type of aped humility is not the worst of his class. He gives you the impression that, at least in some respects, you are his superior, and in that way salves your wounded conscience. More formidable is the humility of the great. There is a saying, found more commonly in books than in life, that the truly great are always humble. Newton was modest and simple, as became the discoverer of the law of gravitation, and many men of true greatness have shown themselves diffident and unpretending. Often, however, the pride is there, though covered up. A great man cannot be ignorant of his greatness, any more than a rich man can be ignorant of his wealth; yet it must be admitted that there are great men modest in their grandeur, as there are rich men modest in their opulence.

Within proper limits, pride, like every other passion, has its uses and advantages. Some men it makes ridiculous; others it prevents from becoming so. The man who is troubled with a "tumor and inflammation of self-conceit" is stiff and ungainly, whereas a legitimate quantity of this marketable article, properly placed, enables a man to carry himself with dignity and courage.

"After pride comes a fall." The proverb may be true, but it is not less true that pride often keeps men from falling. Pride of attainment, pride of possession, and pride of birth are phases of self-love that frequently spur men to higher flights.

Avoiding the self-love that inspires us with too high a notion of ourselves and shunning the monstrous pride that apes humility, we may arrive at a degree of pride that is not only dignified but useful. He that places himself neither too high nor too low practices the true humility. Such a man is neither weak, timid, nor mean. He is neither stupid in the presence of his superiors, nor abject before those whom he fears. His talents will not escape recognition on account of his too great modesty, neither will they be obtruded until they become offensive. He will not, like the snob, "admire mean things meanly," but, like a true gentleman, will be honest, generous, brave, and, "possessing these qualities, will exercise them in the most graceful outward manner."

A MAN may be well grounded in the laws of health, yet, without exercise, have a feeble body; he may be crowded with knowledge, yet, without mental activity, have a feeble mind; and likewise he may be well versed in theories of right doing, yet, without the habit of practicing them, he may have a feeble moral character that has no power to resist temptation and no courage to do his duty. Teaching and training must go hand in hand; right feeling and right doing must keep pace with right knowing if we are to have a dutiful child, an upright man, or a righteous nation.

MANNERS are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex and soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and color to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals; they supply them (or they totally destroy them.

THE want of occupation is no less the plague of society than of solitude. Nothing is so apt to narrow the mind; nothing produces more trifling, silly stories, mischief-making lies. When everybody is occupied, we only speak when we have something to say, but when we are doing nothing we are compelled to be always talking, and of all torments that is the most annoying and dangerous.

WE all sorely complain of the shortness of time, and yet have much more than we know what to do with. Our lives are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as if there would be no end of them.

MIGHT I give counsel to any young hearer, I would say to him, try to frequent the company of your betters. In books and life is the most wholesome society. Learn to admire rightly; the great pleasure of life is that. Note what the great men admired; they admired great things; narrow spirits admire basely, and worship meanly.

PROPORTION thy charity to the strength of thy estate, lest God proportion thy estate to the weakness of thy charity; let the lips of the poor be the trumpet of thy gift, lest in seeking applause thou lose thy reward. Nothing is more pleasing to God than an open hand and a close mouth.

HAVE a time and place for everything, and do everything in its time and place, and you will not only accomplish more, but have far more leisure than those who are always hurrying, as if in vain attempting to overtake time that had been lost.

GREAT merit or great failings will make you respected or despised; but trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done or neglected, will make you either liked or disliked in the general run of the world.

IF it be the characteristic of a worldly man that he desecrates what is holy, it should be of the Christian to consecrate what is secular, and to recognize a present and presiding divinity in all things.

HE who has never denied himself for the sake of giving has but glanced at the joys of charity. We owe our superfluity, and to be happy in the performance of our duty we must exceed it.

IN dress, be neat and unobtrusive. The perfection of dress is to be so perfectly in keeping with your occupation that the attention of an observer is not directed to it at all.

SIMPLICITY of expenditure is important to peace and happiness. The spending of money always involves choice and usually some sacrifice. The art of selection is one on which much of life's happiness depends.

THE first and most important element of praise should be absolute truthfulness. Without this it is worse than useless.

The World's Happenings.

Boston has been having a deaf mute convention.

Mary Jane Zell, of Peoria, is past 70, yet she is suing a jilt for $5,000.

Second-story thieves are becoming unpleasantly active in New York.

A thousand Chinamen left San Francisco for home one day recently.

A number of Americans propose to erect a statue of Washington in Paris.

Mrs. Ada C. Bittenbender is a candidate for the Supreme Bench of Nebraska.

The keeping of young alligators as household pets is described as a new "craze."

The Duke of Buccleuch, the richest man in Scotland, has an income of $1,500,000 per annum.

Portions of Iowa have been flooded with counterfeit dollars made of cast-iron heavily plated with silver.

New York has had 28 Governors, only 3 of whom were bachelors, namely, Tilden, Cleveland and Hill.

The marriage fees of some popular New York clergymen are said to amount to more than their salaries.

A Kentucky woman who has had seven sons, all born on Sunday, has petitioned Governor Buckner for a pension.

The finest church edifice in Albany, Ga., is said to be the one now being built by the colored Methodist Episcopal Church there.

A prisoner, on being released from jail in Harrisburg, went out to a cemetery and placed some flowers on his mother's grave.

A dwelling in Boston being moved intact is to be loaded on a scow, and in that way carried part of the distance to its new location.

It has been estimated that the number of young ladies who find regular and profitable employment as type-writers in New York alone reaches beyond two thousand.

The Indians on the Oneida reservation have a grand lodge of temperance societies made up of four subordinate lodges, two of which are located in Canada and two in Wisconsin.

Pork King Armour, it is stated, has received a suggestion to form a regiment of militia from the ranks of his employees, to act as a special force in case of rioting in Chicago.

The venerable John G. Whittier, the Quaker poet, has a lingering fondness for the trade he learned as a boy, that of shoemaking. He carefully examines every portion of the shoes he wears.

S. O. Hackley, of Anderson, Ky., an old soldier, preserves, as a relic of war times a little paper of quinine which a doctor gave him on the battle-field of Camden, North Carolina, 24 years ago.

A young man of Hudson, Mich., while in a sleeper going west, dreamed he had arrived at Kansas City, arose, made his toilet, took his valise, and jumped off a rapidly moving train and escaped uninjured.

Lightning struck a basket of eggs in a farm-yard near Meriden, Miss., not long ago, and a man who witnessed the descent of the electric fluid solemnly declares that it hatched out chickens from several of the eggs.

At Enterprise, Fla., recently, C. R. Cook was convicted of the murder of G. E. Hoyt. Cook flew into a fit of passion one day last August because Hoyt persisted in playing a piano, and it was while thus frenzied that he shot him.

Already this winter several boys in different parts of the country have had their tongues frozen to iron pipes. At Griffin, Ga., the other day a lad who was thus unfortunate, badly lacerated his tongue in a struggle to free himself.

When the auctioneer had reached the word "gone" at a sale in Teeswater, Ont., the other day, the floor collapsed, and 75 people, several counters and stoves were deposited in a heap below. About 20 persons were injured, but none fatally.

While Mrs. Margaret Twibill, of Montpelier, Indiana, was using stove blacking on her kitchen range the other day a small quantity of the polish got into a cut on her hand. Blood poisoning has ensued, and it may be necessary, it is thought, to amputate the hand.

A freight car labeled "powder," standing at Phillipsburg, Pa., for two days, created much apprehension and people shunned it. When opened, however, it was seen to contain barrels of apples, and, so a local paper says, the barrels were as full as when they were shipped.

When an express train on the Boston and Lowell Railroad came thundering along near Nashua, one day recently, a tramp, who was walking along the road with a companion, called out: "I am going to board that train if it kills me!" He did try to board it, but was thrown to the ground and fatally injured.

Burglars entered the basement of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Jersey City, one night recently, rifled the poor boxes of their contents and took a crown from a statue of the Blessed Virgin. They also broke open the tabernacle door, but did not find anything, as the sacred vessels had been removed for the night to a more secure place.

Last June a Welworth, N. Y., young woman, while returning home from Albany, lost her purse and railroad ticket, and was about being put off the train when a male passenger, who afterwards turned out to be a well-to-do California banker, paid her fare. She learned his address and a few days later forwarded him the amount, which led to a further correspondence that ended recently in the couple's marriage.

A Somerset business man not long since had occasion to write to a gentleman who evidently had few correspondents. The envelope had the usual "Return in 10 days to Mr. ——, Somerset, Ky.," on it. In about ten days the letter came back to him, accompanied by a scrawling note, the writer saying that he had returned the letter according to the request on the envelope, though he didn't see why he was so "all-fired particular about having it sent back."

ROSE AND THORN.

BY P. B. B.

Sing for the scent of the rose;
Sing for the flower and the leaf.
He loves but the deeper who knows
That the loves of the roses are brief.
Sing for the scent of the rose.

Sigh for the thorns of the rose:
Weep for the worm in the leaf;
The day but dawns to its close—
The corn only rusts to the sheaf.
Sigh for the thorns of the rose.

Miss Garnett's Tenant.

BY P. J. PULLAN.

ON the afternoon of the 20th of March, I was about to leave my office, when my clerk came in and told me that a gentleman wished to speak to me, if I was disengaged.

"Yes—I can see him," I replied.

The gentleman was shown into my room. He was a tall pleasant-looking man. There was nothing remarkable about him—at least, that was my first impression; he in no way repelled me. I have since heard people who were acquainted with him declare that from the first interview they noticed something repulsive in his features—that, without knowing why, they shrank from him. I do not wish to throw any doubts on the veracity of my friends—it is impossible they experienced the feelings they described.

All I have to say is that it is strange they never mentioned having had such sensations until the trial took place in which he played the prominent part. From my own experience I maintain that nothing is more fallacious than the theory that a man's character is written in his face. I do not suppose I am less observant than my neighbors.

I had many interviews with Mr. Young—for that was my visitor's name—and until the disclosures made a short time before his trial I never supposed him capable of committing a crime.

On this afternoon I saw before me a tall, singularly gentlemanly-looking man. His skin was dark, but it seemed more the darkness of sunburn than his natural complexion. His features were ordinary, his nose was perhaps rather large. He wore a beard and moustache, and his hair was cut very short. He introduced himself, and thus began—

"I understand you are acting for Miss Garnett in the matter of letting the Gray House?"

"I am," I returned.

"I have seen the house," he went on, "and I think it will suit me. The rent too, I am told, is not high?"

"No," I said; "we are asking a very low rent. I suppose you know the reason?"

"I have heard something of it, but I must say I do not put much faith in the report."

"Neither do I," I returned; "if I did, I should not try to let the place."

"I thought not," said Mr. Young. "I said to myself that a man in your position would not undertake to let a house about which there was anything seriously wrong. But of course the place has a bad name—you offer it cheap; and, I may as well tell you frankly, I cannot afford to pay a high rent."

"If you agree to take the house "I said," "I must first be assured that you know everything to its prejudice."

"I think I do know," he interrupted.

"I will assure myself that you do," returned I. "The facts are briefly these. The house was left to Miss Garnett by her uncle. Being situated in the country, it did not suit her to occupy it herself; she therefore let it to a worthy couple who had one child, to whom they were devoted. Before they had been six months in the place the child sickened, and in twenty-four hours it was dead."

"In twenty-four hours?" repeated my visitor thoughtfully. "You are certain as to the time? I was told two days."

"I am telling the facts of the case—no one knows them better than myself," I replied. "Doctors were called in, and pronounced that death was the result of a malignant form of typhoid fever. They then thought it necessary to discover a reason for the disease attacking this poor child. They suggested drains. The drains were examined and found to be in perfect order; then they proposed to have the drinking-water analyzed. Some impurities were found in the water. The tenant, though his lease had still more than two years to run, left the house, declaring that he would not stay there to run the risk of having himself or his wife poisoned."

"I have heard all that," said Mr. Young; "and I made up my mind to come to you frankly, and ask you for the moment to forget the interests of Miss Garnett, and tell me whether you really believe the water to be so polluted. I will trust in you, and be guided by your advice."

His manner was singularly straightforward and simple as he said this. I answered him as straightforwardly.

"My dear sir, I believe the water to be perfectly innocuous, and that in taking the house at the rent asked you will be making a capital bargain."

He seemed pleased, and said—

"That is exactly my opinion. I think therefore you may look upon me with certainty as the tenant of the Gray House."

"By the-way," I said, as he was leaving, "I forget to ask if you have any family?"

"I have a wife," he returned.

At that moment I suppose the man's mind was full of the diabolical scheme he afterwards carried out, but in his smile, as he said "I have a wife," I declare I saw nothing sinister.

Before closing with Mr. Young as a tenant I made the usual inquiries about his position and circumstances. The references I received being satisfactory, within a very short time the lease was drawn up and signed, and I heard that Mr. Young and his wife had taken possession of the Gray House.

Except in a business way I expected to hear nothing more of Miss Garnett's tenant; but, to my intense amazement, about six months after my first interview with him, Mr. Young burst into my office, with every appearance of deep agitation on his face.

"You—you have murdered my wife!" were his first words.

I thought the man was mad. I got a little farther from him, and rang the bell for my clerk.

"Oh, you may send for any one you like!" he shouted, as my clerk entered.

"I don't care how many witnesses you call to hear my words. Have me up for libel if you like; but what I say is perfectly true. You have murdered my wife!"

"Do you mean that your wife is dead?" I asked.

"She may be now; she was dying when I left her. I hurried into town to get Doctor Thompson, as I don't put any faith in country practitioners. Doctor Thompson can't start with me for another hour, so I have come to you to tell you what you have done."

"What I have done!" I repeated.

"Yes—you!" he said fiercely. "Did you not advise me to take that wretched house? Did you not say the water was harmless? And I, like a fool, believed a lawyer could tell the truth, and trusted you; and now my wife has sickened, as that child did a year ago, and, like the child, will die!"

I was perfectly aghast. Could it be as he said? Was his wife really dying? Two deaths in that house in so short a period, and from the same cause!

Had the doctors then been right in the first instance, and had I, by my obstinate adherence to the belief that half the discoveries of modern science are humbug, been in fact the cause of this unhappy woman's illness and possible death?

The contemplation was not pleasant. To all intents Miss Garnett and I were, as Mr. Young told me, morally guilty of murder. But I was a lawyer, and not much given to indulging in morbid self-accusations.

It was furthermore my duty to do all in my power to save myself and my client from the grave imputations which might be cast upon us if Mr. Young's accusation were allowed to pass unchallenged.

"You are making a very serious charge," I said quietly. "I think however you are too excited to quite understand what you are saying; but in Miss Garnett's interests I am called upon to act with decision. I must now insist on your calling in another medical man besides Doctor Thompson to see your wife."

"Doctor Thompson is known to be the best man," returned Mr. Young. "You cannot suggest any one whose opinion and advice can be better worth having."

"Doctor Thompson is to a certain extent a specialist. It was he furthermore who attended the child of the last tenant, and attributed its demise to drinking impure water. He will naturally look upon your wife's case as a confirmation of his previous opinion."

"You would throw doubts upon his integrity?"

"Not at all; but no man, even the most honest and liberal-minded, can avoid being biased in favor of his own theories. I therefore ask you to call in a doctor who knows nothing of the former case and who will consequently be in a position to judge more impartially."

Mr. Young hesitated for a moment.

"You can do as you choose," he said at last.

We left the office together, and then separated. He went to fetch Doctor Thompson, I to see a Doctor Stewart, who I thought would be a man likely to give a trustworthy opinion. It was arranged that we should meet at the railway-station in half an hour's time—a train then left which would take us more quickly to our destination than any other mode of conveyance.

At the appointed hour we met on the platform. Doctor Thompson bowed to me very stiffly.

"Another mysterious illness at the Gray House!" he said, looking at me with an expression that made me feel inclined to knock him down.

"Mr. Young knew everything to the disadvantage of the house when he agreed to take it," I responded.

Doctor Thompson shrugged his shoulders. The train at that moment came up, and we took our seats, and particular conversation became impossible.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the Gray House. A servant met us on the threshold.

"Oh, sir," she cried, addressing Mr. Young, "you are too late!"

He staggered against the wall, and covered his face with his hands.

"Do you mean the unfortunate lady is dead?" I asked.

"Yes; she died an hour ago."

I was too much overcome to say anything. The two doctors took the matter more quietly. Such scenes were not uncommon with them.

"A train goes back to town in half an hour," Doctor Stewart remarked. "We had better return to the station, and await it there. Our presence is not required here."

Doctor Thompson turned to me.

"I hope you are satisfied with your work," he said. "I only wish it were in the power of the law to punish you. In any case you and Miss Garnett may rest assured that you have two deaths on your consciences. The first may have been the result of ignorance; for the second you can plead no excuse. You wilfully disregarded my opinion, and see what you have done." He pointed to Mr. Young—he had sunk into a chair, and his whole frame was shaken with convulsive sobs. "Yes," continued the Doctor, "for your love of money you have ruined a man's life and brought on a most unhappy woman a sudden and painful death."

I could not answer a word, and slunk out of the house, feeling more crushed and humiliated than did ever a detected criminal.

The next day I wrote to Miss Garnett. I told her of the last tragic occurrence at the Gray House, and concluded by informing her that I must decline to attempt to get another tenant for it. I directed my letter to Dresden, when I believed Miss Garnett to be.

More than a fortnight went by without my receiving any answer. In the meantime Mr. Young had written to me in the terms very similar to those employed by the previous tenant, informing me that in the circumstances it was impossible for him to continue to live at the Gray House.

At the end of a fortnight Miss Garnett answered my letter in person. She was a short plump little woman, with very bright eyes and a sharp quick way of speaking.

"Good morning," she said, as she walked into my office. "I see you are disengaged. I have come to talk to you about the Gray House."

"It is a most unpleasant affair," I began.

"Fiddlesticks!" interrupted Miss Garnett. "Don't begin talking that sort of nonsense. You know as well as I do that Doctor Thompson is a self-opinionated old donkey, and that there is no reason in the world why people should die at the Gray House more than any other."

"They do die there, however, with most astonishing rapidity, Miss Garnett."

"Not so very astonishing."

"I must beg leave to differ from you."

"Of course; you have apparently gone over to the enemy, and I presume you are prepared to allow that you have killed Mr. Young's wife."

"I certainly don't allow that."

"Well, don't lose your temper so early in our interview; I have a great deal to say, and you must hear me out quietly. And please, Mr. Wilkins, do not interrupt me; nothing annoys me so much as being stopped in the middle of my remarks."

Miss Garnett was a lady accustomed her own way. I leaned back in my chair and prepared to act the part of listener.

"In the first place," she began, "there can be no reason in the world why the drinking-water at the Gray House should suddenly have become a deadly poison. My uncle, as you know, lived there during the last sixty years of his life, and when he died, at the age of ninety-six, no one supposed it was from drinking impure water."

Here I could not restrain a smile, and Miss Garnett saw it.

"Oh, I know what you want to say!" she went on. "You wish to remind me that uncle was never known to make use of water except to wash himself. And did you see a healthier, heartier man? I never met a teetotaler yet that was his match."

"May I ask if you have come here to give me a lecture on the temperance movement?" I ventured to say.

Miss Garnett laughed.

"No, not exactly. Where was I when you interrupted me with your frivolous remarks about my uncle's non-abstemiousness."

"I interrupted you!"

"Yes, of course. However, do try not to do it again. What I mean to say is this—the water cannot suddenly have gone bad. The first death might have been the result of infection contracted elsewhere, and, as to the second——"

Miss Garnett made a long pause.

"Well?" I said at last.

"The second," she finished, looking at me very steadily, "is a murder."

"A murder, Miss Garnett!" I exclaimed, getting up hastily and staring at her in some consternation. For the moment I believed she was about to charge me with the crime.

"Yes, a murder," she repeated. "But sit down, please; you have nothing to do with it. Don't look so frightened; I haven't a couple of policemen outside to arrest you."

Miss Garnett pointed impatiently to the chair. I sat down.

"When I got your letter," she resumed, "I was at Dresden; and a friend of mine Mrs. Leslie, was staying with me. I was provoked; it seemed inconsiderate of that woman to die just after going to live in my house. I told Mrs. Leslie the circumstances. She listened very attentively—and in that respect, Mr. Wilkins, I wish you would imitate her—she never interrupted me. When I had finished she said, 'Do you know anything about this Mr. Young?' I shook my head. 'Who is he?' 'I believe he was in the Indian Civil Service.' She started at this. 'Do you know,' she asked eagerly, 'if his wife's name was "Sara Tristram"?' I didn't know. 'Oh, I hope not!' she said. I asked why. Then she told me that she had been at school with a certain Sara Tristram; that Sara had married a Young who had been in India, and furthermore that she had ten thousand pounds of her own. This information I felt might be important. We also found out that her money was settled on her for her life, but that on her death it became her husband's. Now, Mr. Wilkins, did you ever find out as much?"

Her question was abrupt.

"Certainly not," I replied. "Such discoveries are not very useful, and I do not see that they are of much value to us."

"Oh, don't you? But perhaps you will allow that, if an unscrupulous man knows himself entitled to ten thousand pounds on his wife's death, he may not be particularly anxious that his wife's life should be a long one?"

"You must be sure he is an unscrupulous man."

"Exactly; and I am very sure Mr. Young is one."

"Can you prove it?"

"Prove it! That is one of the subjects on which you men are so aggravating. You always expect everything to be proved before you will believe it. Of course I can't prove it; but I am perfectly convinced in my own mind that Mr. Young poisoned his wife, and that is sufficient for me."

"As long as you keep your belief to yourself," I returned, "you are welcome to hold it."

"But I don't intend to keep it to myself. Do you suppose I am going to submit tamely to be accused of neglecting my duties as a landlord and wilfully letting an unhealthy house? I maintain that the house is healthy; and certainly consideration for Mr. Young's feelings will not prevent me from trying to prove my point."

"If you are going to do anything rash, Miss Garnett," I said rather angrily, "I trust you will not come to me for assistance."

I was annoyed with the woman. It

seemed to me that in her desire to clear her name from blame she was recklessly going to destroy the peace of mind and reputation of an unfortunate man. I could not forget his utter prostration when he heard of his wife's death—he felt so evidently the loss; and here was a woman bent on adding to his pain.

"I won't ask for your assistance," returned Miss Garnett; "but I feel convinced that a crime has been committed, and I will not rest until I have unearthed it and brought the villain to justice. I will not trouble you longer to-day; but when you see me next I shall bring with me proofs which will satisfy even you."

Then, without another word, she left the room.

* * * * * *

I do not suppose Miss Garnett has as yet appeared in a very favorable light; but, in case the description of my interview with her may have left an unjust impression, I will give a fuller account of her.

Miss Garnett was a woman with a history. I knew something of that history from my sister, who was a great friend of hers.

Mr. Garnett, her father, was a man of considerable property. His wife had died shortly after the birth of their daughter, and about the same time his brother also died, leaving an only son to his guardianship.

It was natural that the boy and girl, growing up together, should become attached to each other.

At that time I knew neither of them, but my sister has told me they were both good-looking young people. With the full consent of Mr. Garnett, they became engaged; the wedding-day was fixed, and the usual preparations were begun for the marriage.

My sister was to be chief bridesmaid, and went to stay with Miss Garnett and give her all the help women do give each other in such cases.

The wedding was to be on a Thursday; on the preceding Saturday my sister was in her room, when Miss Garnett suddenly came in. She looked terribly agitated.

"What is the matter, Bessie?" exclaimed my sister.

"I don't know," returned her friend; "but something dreadful has happened, and there will be no wedding on Thursday."

"No wedding?" repeated my sister, staring blankly at her.

"No—no wedding!" sobbed the bride. "Oh, it is too cruel—and I cannot understand it all!"

"Tell me what has happened. Perhaps there is some mistake."

"No, there can be no mistake," she returned. "About two hours ago papa told me he wanted to speak to me in the study. As soon as I got there, he locked the door, and, taking my hand in his, led me to a chair. His manner was very grave and kind. He began by reminding me how dearly he loved me, and how convinced he was that I trusted him and would never believe he would cause me needless pain."

"That I am sure he would not," observed my sister.

"So am I," returned Miss Garnett; "and it is that that makes my trouble hardest to bear. I know papa must have acted rightly; but, oh, I wish he could have been wrong!"

"Well, what else did he say to you?"

"He told me that he had been pleased at my engagement, that he had believed Robert would make me happy, that my happiness was his one consideration in consenting to the marriage. I knew something terrible was coming. I felt myself trembling. My father stroked my hand tenderly. 'My poor child,' he continued, 'try to bear yourself bravely. I have bad news to tell you, and I would give everything I possess to be spared the telling. I do not think Robert will make you happy. Do not ask me my reasons, but trust me. There are some things a man shrinks from telling his daughter. Be satisfied with knowing that he is unworthy of you, and that Heaven, as I do, that I discovered his unworthiness in time to save you and another from a cruel wrong. 'Papa,' I said, 'do you mean I am not to marry Robert?' 'I do mean it.' 'And I am not to know what he has done? Surely that is not just to me!' 'It is just, my dear.' 'May you not be doing him a wrong?' 'No; there is no possibility of doubt in the case. I taxed him with his guilt—he could not deny it. I promised him to be silent if he would agree to my conditions.' 'And those were?' 'That he should never see you nor communicate with you again. By this time he is a hundred miles from here.' That is my story," concluded Miss Garnet. "Did you ever hear of a more miserable girl than myself? What can I do? I cannot rebel against my father—was he ever anything but just and kind? And yet it seems so hard to give up my lover like this."

"It is very hard," my sister assented; "but, with a father like yours, what else can you do? He has reasons for what he has done, and you must submit."

So Miss Garnett submitted, and bore her trouble bravely. Of course there was a scandal, and people talked, but their remarks did not reach Miss Garnett. She and her father left the place before it was known that the match was broken off, and they never returned to that part of the world again.

What became of her lover no one knew, and the secret of his offence, whatever it was, Mr. Garnett kept most religiously. Having once sacrificed her inclination so dutifully, Miss Garnett probably thought she had done as much as could be expected of her, and might in future be allowed to have her own way; at any rate, she had got into the habit of taking it when I first made her acquaintance, which was about five years before I met Mr. Young.

Her father had just died, and I found myself appointed one of the executors of his will.

Miss Garnett and I became capital friends, but the more we knew of each other the more we disputed. Yet never till our last interview had I been really angry with her.

With all her sharp imperious ways, I felt sure she was at heart a noble-natured woman, and it was with a feeling of acute disappointment that I heard her declare her determination to bring on a wretched and, as I believed, most innocent man suspicion and disgrace.

* * * * * *

A month passed, and I heard nothing more from Miss Garnett. I began to think she had indulged in an idle threat merely to irritate me, and I was pleased it should be so.

But one morning Miss Garnett came to see me. I knew at once that something serious had happened, for she was silent, and there was a grave perplexed look on her face.

"What is it, Miss Garnett?" I asked at last.

"It is very horrible," she remarked, but more to herself than to me—"very horrible; I wish I didn't believe it."

"Didn't believe what?"

"That he has murdered his wife."

"Are you speaking of Mr. Young."

"Of course."

"You have no reason to believe anything so shameful of him," I remarked.

"Have I not? Ah, Mr. Wilkins, you don't know me yet! I told you when I last saw you that I would bring that man's guilt home to him, and"—looking me very calmly in the face—"I have done so."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Do you mean you can prove your suspicion?"

"I do mean it."

"But how, in Heaven's name?"

"Link by link, I am joining a chain of evidence which will bring a most heartless villain to justice."

"Will you explain more fully?"

I said this sarcastically. I did not for one moment believe that Miss Garnett had any evidence worth the name. She took no notice of my tone, but replied in a slow grave manner—

"Yes, I will explain everything. You remember I told you of my friend Mrs. Leslie. She accompanied me home from Dresden, and has been staying with me since. On the day after I saw you she went with me to see the Gray House."

"And pray had Mr. Young left the proofs of his guilt behind him there?" I asked impatiently.

"Yes, he had," returned Miss Garnett. "Listen! We found a maid-servant in the house. She was a respectable woman, but talkative, as has her mistress. Mrs. Leslie was naturally anxious to hear all she could of her old friend, and the maid was equally anxious to tell her; and this is her story. According to her, Mr. and Mrs. Young were very unhappy together. She was not a very meek lady—she insisted on having a will of her own, and never hesitated to assert that will. She had money, and apparently Mr. Young was very anxious that she should give him the control of it; but this she absolutely refused to do. She was a healthy woman, and never seemed to ail at all until a few days before her death. One morning she complained of a headache and thirst. The maid was in the room, and heard Mr. Young ask in reply if he should make her some more lemonade, the same as she had drunk on the day before. Mrs. Young assented, whereupon her husband rose and said he would prepare some for her. He came back shortly to the room with a glass of lemonade, which he gave to his wife. She drank it, said it was very refreshing, and at his suggestion lay down on the sofa. To make a long story short," said Miss Garnett, for I had just made a movement to show that the narration was slightly fatiguing, "Mrs. Young drank a good deal of lemonade—always prepared, remember, by her husband—and the next morning she was very ill indeed. The doctor was at once sent for; he pronounced it a severe case of typhoid fever. During that day and night the poor woman grew worse, and the next morning her husband went into town to fetch Doctor Thompson. Before going he made a fresh supply of lemonade, and bade the servant give it to her mistress when she was thirsty. Mrs. Young was in a semi-conscious state. After a time she seemed to rouse herself a little. The servant came forward and offered her the lemonade. The sick woman pushed it aside. 'No,' she said; 'it is that which has killed me.' Those were her last conscious words. She died before her husband returned."

"Yes, I know that," I said. "And is that all you have to tell me, Miss Garnett? Do you really mean to offer the astounding proposition that, because a man is attentive enough to prepare lemonade for his wife, he must, should his wife die, necessarily have poisoned her?"

"Certainly, when he has been sent to put the poison into the drink."

"And did any one see Mr. Young do that?" I asked contemptuously.

"Yes. Coming unexpectedly into the room, the maid saw him drop something out of a little bottle into a glass."

"And can you prove that the contents of the bottle were deadly?"

Miss Garnett's answer took me completely by surprise.

"I can," she replied. "The bottle is now in the hands of an analyst, and he has pronounced the contents to be deadly poison.

For the first time during our interview I began to think that Miss Garnett had really made a discovery; and yet how could she have made it? Was it likely that, if Mr. Young was the scoundrel she described him to be, he would have left behind him the proof of his guilt?

"May I ask how the bottle came into your hands?" I said.

"In a very simple way. Mr. Young had a small medicine-case which he kept in a cupboard in his room. On the morning he went into the town the maid was in this room, and saw a key lying on the floor. She picked it up, and was going to place it on a table, when she was summoned to the sick woman. Mrs. Young was in her last agony, and in the confusion which followed the servant forgot all about the key. It has turned out to be the key of the cupboard. When opened, we found the medicine-case containing the identical bottle from which the girl had seen her master drop something into the lemonade."

"Well, Miss Garnett," I said at last, "now that you have made this discovery what do you mean to do?"

"What would you advise me to do?" she asked.

"Say nothing more about it," I returned, without a moment's hesitation.

"What!" she exclaimed. "Do you advise me to leave that poor woman unavenged? That surely cannot be right! I tell you, as I stood in her room, by the bed on which she died, everything seemed as clear to me as if I had seen it. I saw the poor pale face, I heard her piteous moans, I shuddered as I saw him with deliberate cruelty press on her the drink he knew would kill her. Oh, poor soul—poor murdered innocent! Is she to die and no one be brought to justice? Is that villain to enjoy the fruits of his crime? No! I swore then, standing by her bed, that I would avenge her wrongs—and I will keep my oath!"

As Miss Garnett spoke, her eyes flashed and her voice trembled with indignation. Was it a presentment of coming evil, was it a doubt in my own mind of Mr. Young's guilt, which prevented me from sympathizing with her? I do not know; but with an earnestness which I had never shown before I now implored her to leave the matter alone.

"You are entering on a task the responsibilities of which you cannot wholly understand," I said. "Even supposing you are right, and the man is the villain you believe him to be, who made you the avenger of blood? I entreat you to let me turn you aside from this purpose before it is too late. I feel certain that only evil will come of this, and some day you will bitterly repent what you have done. Justice will be done to him, you may be sure; then let it come from some other hand than yours."

"Perhaps you are right," said Miss Garnett slowly. "I wish I had consulted you before; but you angered me at our last interview, and now your advice comes too late."

"Too late, Miss Garnett?"

"Yes, too late. My information is already in the hands of the police, and a warrant has been issued for his apprehension."

Before I could say anything to express my consternation at the precipitancy with which Miss Garnett had acted, there was a sharp rap at my door. I made a movement to ring for my clerk to say that I could not possibly see any one, when I was arrested by hearing a voice I thought I recognized say—

"If he is engaged with Miss Garnett, he will see me. It is in accordance with Miss Garnett's instructions that I am here now."

I looked inquiringly towards my client.

"Yes, we must see him," she said, "I told him to find me wherever I was, as soon as he discovered anything of importance. It is Mr. Brown the detective."

I had occasionally met Brown in a business way. He was a man generally to be relied on, although by no means infallible. Miss Garnett turned eagerly towards him as he entered the room.

"Well," she said, "have you made any further discovery?"

"Yes," returned the detective.

"Of importance?"

"Possibly."

He looked at Miss Garnett with a little curiosity as he spoke, and for a moment it struck me unpleasantly that there was compassion also. But the idea was so preposterous that I dismissed it at once. Why on earth should Brown the detective feel sorry for Miss Garnett?

"Do you really believe that a murder has been committed?" I asked him.

"I have no doubt about it," he replied.

"And pray what is your last discovery?"

"That hangs on a question of identity," he returned. "I think, Miss Garnett, you have never seen this man Young?"

"Never."

"Ah, I thought not! I must ask you to see him."

"I would rather do nothing of the kind," said Miss Garnett. "I could not possibly identify him—if you mean me to do that. Where is he?"

"He is at present in prison."

"In prison?" I echoed. "Where?"

"In this town. He was arrested in Liverpool two days ago."

"And why do you wish Miss Garnett to see him?" I asked.

"Merely to settle a question of identity."

As Miss Garnett had never seen Mr. Young, it was not difficult for me to divine that he was supposed to have been known at some time by a different name, and that Miss Garnett might have met him.

"I trust it will not inconvenience you to accompany me now?" said the detective, turning to her.

For the first time during our interview Miss Garnett spoke in her usual tone and manner as she answered—

"Certainly it will inconvenience me; and I haven't the least intention of accompanying you." She drew herself up, threw back her head, and evidently considered the matter settled.

"Having gone so far in the matter," I remarked, "I wonder you do not go on to the end. Surely you are not deterred from your object by the mere prospect of being called upon to stand face to face with the man whom you have been so determined to bring to justice?"

She looked at me reproachfully.

"I have done wrong," she admitted—"I know that. Is it very generous of you to force upon me a knowledge of my error?"

"Forgive me!" I said humbly. "My remark was ungenerous. But it seems to me you ought to see the man. Probably Mr. Brown is wrong in his supposition that you are acquainted with him, and in proving him wrong you may do the prisoner a service."

I made this suggestion in all honesty of purpose. Could I have foreseen the result, I would rather have lost my right hand than give such fatal advice.

"If you think that," said Miss Garnett, "I will accompany Mr. Brown at once."

We all rose to leave the room. As Miss Garnett passed out, the detective lingered for a moment to speak to me.

"Your sister lives here, does she not?" was his very unexpected question.

"What has my sister to do with the affair?"

"She is able to establish the identity of the prisoner," returned the detective.

I had never liked the affair; I liked it less than ever now. When we called for my sister, we found her ready waiting for us.

"I have already informed Miss Wilkins that we shall require her services," Mr. Brown observed to me.

Then, without further explanation, we started for the prison.

Arrived there, we were shown into a room. There was one occupant, a woman, who sat at the farther end of it. She was so closely veiled that it was impossible to distinguish her features. When we entered, I fancied she made a movement as if to rise, but at a sign from Brown she resumed her seat. The detective then left us.

We were all more or less uncomfortable. Miss Garnett felt that but for her the murder would never have been discovered, and did not at all relish the position of being the prisoner's first accuser.

Let him be guilty or not guilty, she had taken a step she would have retracted. The bravest might well shrink from the sense of responsibility which lay on her shoulders.

My sister, I think, was in mortal dread lest she might be locked up for contempt of court through failure to identify the prisoner, and, like most of her surroundings that it was all she could do to keep from tears.

As to myself, it was a feeling of intense repugnance that I looked forward to meeting as a suspected criminal the man whom I had last viewed with such intense compassion. When I was not thinking of him, I looked at the veiled woman, and vaguely wondered who she was and why she should be in that room.

At last we heard footsteps and the faint murmur of voices outside.

We none of us spoke, but anxiously watched the door. It opened, and there on the threshold appeared Miss Garnett's tenant.

He looked haggard and worn, but I had time to notice nothing further—my attention was entirely directed to Miss Garnett. She had taken a few steps forward, every vestige of color gone from her fresh healthy face.

"Robert," she exclaimed, with trembling lips, "what has brought you here?"

I turned to my sister for some explanation. She looked scarcely less agitated than Miss Garnett.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Can't you understand?" returned my sister. "That is Robert Garnett, the man she ought to have married fifteen years ago."

A sound of a heavy fall was heard from the other end of the room. Turning my eyes in that direction, I saw that the veiled woman was lying in a heap on the floor.

At the same moment I heard some one outside say, "There, that will do!" the man I believed to be Mr. Young disappeared, and the detective entered the room, carefully shutting the door behind him.

Perhaps there can be no more embarrassing position for a man than to find himself with two women on the verge of hysterics on one side of him and one in a dead faint on the other.

I looked angrily at the detective as he came in, for I felt that he was responsible for the unpleasantness of my situation.

"I am sorry," he said, addressing Miss Garnett, "that you should have been so discomposed; but it was necessary to prove the identity of the prisoner, and I think it has been done effectually."

While speaking he had gone up to the fallen woman. My sister and Miss Garnett went to his assistance. They raised her and put her on a chair; she soon opened her eyes.

"You are better now," said Brown. "Hush! Do not speak—I will tell all that need be told."

Now that her veil was removed I scrutinized carefully the features of the strange

woman. In spite of her deadly paleness, she struck me as being singularly handsome.

My sister has since told me that the startling events which were taking place about me must have unsettled my judgment, and that the woman had no pretensions to beauty; still I feel inclined to adhere to my original opinion.

"I have a strange story to tell you, Miss Garnett," said the detective.

"Then do you not think," I interrupted, "it had better be reserved for some more fitting time?"

I felt convinced that painful disclosures were about to be made, and I was anxious Miss Garnett should be spared; but my client settled the matter in her usual decided way.

"If the disclosures concern me," she said, "and I choose to hear them, I cannot see how there could be a more fitting time. As they don't concern you, if you prefer to leave the room you can."

Curiosity, we all know, is a female prerogative. I was not in the least curious, still, when something very remarkable was about to be told, I do not suppose any man would have deliberately foregone the chance of hearing it. I did not leave the room.

Both Miss Garnett and my sister had by this time got over their inclination to go into hysterics: they stood, one on each side of the strange woman, chafing her cold hands. The latter made an attempt to free her hands, but she was too weak.

"Now, then, proceed with your harrowing tale," said Miss Garnett.

She spoke in a hard, high voice; but I, who knew her well, knew that it was only an imitation of her usual tones; I saw, also, that her hands, when she paused for a moment in her occupation of chafing those of the strange woman, trembled violently.

"I think," began the detective, "I have established the question of identity. You have all three recognized as Robert Garnett the man whom you, Mr. Wilkins, have known as Young, Miss Garnett's tenant."

In spite of a strong effort to control herself, a low groan burst from Miss Garnett's lips.

"Yes," continued Brown, "I have found out his history pretty completely. I have traced him back about a year before the time of his arrival at the Gray House, when he was in the South of England, and about to be married to Miss Sara Tristram. He was in the Indian Civil Service, I got some particulars of his Indian career. I found that his appointment had been secured to him through the patronage of a Mr. Garnett. Making inquiries about this Mr. Garnett, I found that his nephew had mysteriously disappeared on the eve of his marriage, about the same time that the Civil Service gained a new member. I then set to work to discover the reasons for the nephew's appearance."

The detective here broke off in his narrative, as the strange woman had fainted again.

I took the opportunity of saying to him:

"Your story, so far as I can make out, principally concerns Miss Garnett. May I ask why this unfortunate invalid should be forced to stay here and to listen to disclosures which cannot concern her?"

"Pardon me," said the detective, "but they concern her very closely. She seems better, so I can continue. Two days ago Garnett was arrested in her house. She knew nothing about the crime, and was brought down here under the impression that she was to identify a very different criminal."

"What was he doing in her house?" demanded Miss Garnett sharply.

"He was trying to persuade her to go to America with him," replied Brown. "He had known her for many years—he knew her at the time he was engaged to marry you, Miss Garnett. He made a promise of marriage, he betrayed her, and, when she at last discovered his engagement to you, she went to your father and told him all."

As he spoke, my sister and Miss Garnett each dropped the hand she was chafing, and moved away from the woman. A faint color overspread her face. The detective smiled a little, but went on.

"The elder Mr. Garnett proved the truth of her story, had an angry interview with his nephew, requested him to leave the neighborhood at once and for ever, and to give up the name he had so disgraced. His terms were acceded to, and Robert Garnett became Robert Young.

"That will do," said Miss Garnett, in a weak voice. "I have heard enough." She put out her hand to me. "Mr. Wilkins, please take me away from this horrible place."

I drew her hand within my arm and led both her and my sister from the room. Neither of them cast one glance of commiseration on or said one pitying word to Robert Garnett's first victim.

* * * * * *

During the next few weeks I saw but little of Miss Garnett. I heard of her often from my sister.

The friend who had sympathized with her in the first trial of her life was now called upon to comfort her in this last one.

"My heart bleeds for her," said my sister to me one day. "She feels it terribly. She loved him dearly—indeed I think she has never ceased to love him. And now to find out his real character, and to know that by her instrumentality he has been brought to judgment, is more than she can bear."

"Poor soul!" I murmured.

And I asked myself was it by chance that this crime had been discovered by the instrumentality of the two women whom he had so cruelly deceived?

When we sin in our youth, do we forget at the same time the instruments that will punish us hereafter?

Brown explained to me more fully the history of Robert Garnett's career.

The woman he ruined was the daughter of a tradesman in the neighboring town. He had become engaged to his cousin principally because she had a fortune and he had none. He had never intended to give up his connection with Mary Kemble. When she upbraided him for his engagement to his cousin, he explained his intentions, and was surprised to find that she did not agree with his views. Badly as he had treated her, the girl was fond of him, and when she had prevented his marriage she was ready to forgive him.

The one redeeming point in his character was that, as far as in him lay, he returned the girl's affection.

He corresponded with her after he went to India, and I believe, had he been rich, would have married her. Ill-health after some years obliged him to throw up his Indian appointment, and he returned to this country.

He had not served long enough for a pension, and his prospects were very low.

About this time he made the acquaintance of Sara Tristram, and succeeded in persuading her to be his wife. I do not suppose he married her with the intention of murdering her—few crimes are premeditated so long—but the idea must have occurred to him very shortly after his marriage.

On the death of his unfortunate wife, and after he had secured her property, he went to Liverpool, where Mary Kemble was living, and succeeded in persuading her to marry him. It was easy to persuade her.

Of the trial I need say but little. It was the celebrated case of the time. It resulted in a verdict of "Not guilty." There was no moral doubt that the man had poisoned his wife, but there was a want of proof. Still the law that acquitted him was just. Better ten guilty men should escape than one innocent suffer!

But, though he escaped the hangman's hands, he did not escape the punishment of his sin. I saw him taken from the court. He was strongly guarded, for popular indignation ran high against him. Yells and curses resounded on all sides as a savage crowd tried to force their way to him. I caught a glimpse of his face—it was livid with fear.

Some years after his trial I went to a menagerie. As a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, I had been requested to watch the performance of a celebrated lion-tamer. The society wished to interfere to stop the barbarous treatment to which the wild beasts were subjected. A stir among the crowd told me that the performance was about to begin. I was standing close under a cage in which were three or four lionesses. A small door at the back was quickly opened and shut, and the lion-tamer stood among them.

He was a tall well-made man dressed entirely in black. The light fell on his face as he entered—I knew him at once. I stepped back, and almost unconsciously said his name aloud.

He must have heard me, for I saw a change come over him. There was the same look I had seen when he had been hurried from the court-house—a look of abject ghastly fear. Did he hear again the yells of the mob? I know not, but he must have recognized the yells of still more terrible import which now burst on his ears.

It was only a moment of indecision, but it was fatal to him. There was a rush of the savage beasts mad with rage, a short struggle, and he was down among them. He uttered a few wild cries for help, and then nothing was heard but the growling of his victors.

When his mangled remains were at last dragged away, there was but little left by which to identify Robert Garnett; and yet the tears which are shed by a woman only over her first love fall on that ghastly form.

Mary Kemble had followed him faithfully to the last. It was she who told me (as the money he had acquired so easily had been spent, last in unlucky speculations), he wandered about with the mark of Cain on his brow, and at last took to the work which cost him his life.

Miss Garnett never heard of his tragic end; and she is not likely to take upon herself again the office of private detective. I see her often; I admire her immensely, and I believe she has made up her mind to marry me. I expect every day to see her arrive with the license in her hand, and to be marched off to the nearest church immediately. I do not in the least want to get married; but, when a woman insists, how can a man refuse?

MUSTARD.—Prior to the date of about 1720 there was no such luxury as mustard in its present form at our tables. At that time the seed was coarsely pounded in a mortar, as coarsely separated from the integument, and in that rough state prepared for use. In the year mentioned it occurred to an old woman of the name of Clements, residing in Durham, to grind the seed in a mill and pass it through the several processes which are resorted to in making flour from wheat. The secret she kept to herself for many years, and, in the period of her exclusive possession of it supplied the principal parts of the kingdom, and, in particular, the metropolis, with this article. George I stamped it with fashion by his approval. Mrs. Clements regularly twice a year traveled to London and the principal towns throughout England for orders, and the old lady continued to make a considerable amount of money. From this woman residing in Durham it acquired the name of "Durham Mustard."

PERFUMES AND POMADES.

Most of these and perhaps the best are made in France. During the season, traders, or middle-men, go through the country every day with wagons collecting flowers from the farms, for which they pay prices varying according to the extent of the crop and the demands of the market. Their fragrant load is hurried to the nearest manufacturer, and delivered while the flowers are still fresh and crisp. It is necessary that the flowers should be gathered in the morning as soon as possible after the dews of the preceding night have disappeared. In many cases, laboratories are erected on the flower-farm itself; and if the farm is of sufficient size, this adds very much to the profits.

Pomades are the commercial vehicle for absorbing and transporting the perfumes of the jonquil, tuberose, jasmine, and a few other species of flowers. A square frame, or *chassis*, of white wood, about twenty inches by thirty inches in size, is not with a pane of strong plate-glass. On each side of the glass is spread a thin, even layer of grease, which has been purified and refined. Thus prepared, the frames are piled up in ranks six or seven feet high, to await the season of each special flower. When the blossoms arrive, the petals are picked from the stem—the pistils and stamens being discarded—and laid so as to cover the grease in each frame. These being again piled so as to rest upon their wooden edges, which fit closely together, there is formed a series of tight chambers, the floors and ceilings of which are of grease, exposed to the perfume of the flower-leaves within. The grease absorbs the perfume; the spent flowers are removed daily, and fresh ones supplied; and this process goes on from two to four or five months, according to the desired strength of the pomade, which, when sufficiently charged with perfume, is taken from the glass with a wide thin spatula, and packed in tin cans for export. By these methods, the delicate odors of flowers are extracted and retained for transport to distant markets, where, being treated with alcohol, they yield their perfume to that stronger vehicle, and produce the floral waters and extracts of commerce. Coarser pomades are made by heating the flowers in the grease and subjecting the residue to pressure. The spent petals are used for that purpose and in the manufacture of fine soaps.

The process of preparing perfumed oils involves the same principle, except that, instead of solid grease, superfine olive oil is used. With this oil, pieces of coarse cotton fabric are saturated, which are then spread upon wire-netting stretched in wooden frames about three feet by four feet in size. The flowers are spread upon the saturated cloths, and the frames piled one above the other, so that the perfume of the flowers is absorbed as in the previous process.

Essences and 'flower-waters' are produced by ordinary distillation, in which the flowers are boiled with water in large alembics. The vapor carries off the perfume, and is condensed in adjoining copper tanks, like ordinary spirits.

Some of the retorts used for this purpose are of sufficient size to receive at once half a ton of fresh flowers with the requisite water for their distillation. When 'flower-waters' are to be produced, alcohol is used in the distilling tank to receive the perfumes. By skilful combinations of the perfumes of different flowers, sometimes with the addition of chemicals, a large variety of handkerchief extracts, such as 'Patchouli,' 'Jockey Club,' 'West End,' etc., are produced.

THE TOBACCO PIPE.—The Chinese use a handsome little water pipe made entirely of brass or silver. It is all in one piece except the bowl and neck, which is merely a tube with an upper chamber for the tobacco. The merest pinch of long-cut tobacco fills the bowl, and one fill is only expected to provide one or two whiffs. The body of the pipe contains a mere reservoir for tobacco.

The long, clawlike nails of the Celestial are used as deftly as a pair of tweezers in feeling in this little box for a pinch of tobacco. Long strips of prepared paper are used for lighting. This paper burns slowly, and when required for lighting the pipe it is blown into a flame by a peculiar puff.

Any Celestial, man, woman, or child, can produce this flame with a single puff, but an American acquires the same ability only by considerable practice. As each filling produces only a couple of puffs, the pipe has to be refilled over and over again to obtain satisfaction.

Every time a pinch is smoked the remnant is blown out by filling the tube and blowing vigorously through it from the lower end. The rapidity with which a devotee of this pipe fills it, puffs the paper into a flame, lights the tobacco, blows the paper out again, lifts the tube, blows out the refuse, fills it again, etc., is quite a remarkable performance.

The common Cochinchinese uses a pipe of primitive pattern, merely a slender joint of bamboo, with a hole bored in the side near the closed end. A pinch of tobacco is laid on this hole, and affords one or two whiffs.

FOR one man who sincerely pities our misfortunes, there are a thousand who sincerely hate our success.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A good story is told in the London papers of a sadly disappointed candidate, who, after affectionately kissing and praising an assortment of eleven children and marvelling much at the resemblance they bore to a matronly lady, who blushed the while, then requested, with a by-the-way air, that she would mention to her husband that Mr. So and So had called. "Alas, good sir," quoth the lady, "I have no husband!" "But these children, madam; you are surely not a widow?" "I fear you were mistaken, sir, when you first came up. These are not my children; this is an orphan asylum!"

A French investigator has come to the conclusion from his researches that women have a larger proportion of brown eyes than men. He also finds that when both parents have eyes of the like color, the chances are 88 to 12 that their children who arrive at the age of ten years (when the color of their eyes is fixed) will have eyes of the same color. When the parents have eyes of different colors, the chances are 55 to 45 in favor of brown as against blue or grey eyes in the children. He is also of opinion that the health of the brunette type is, as a rule, superior to that of the blonde type.

A new kind of outrage is being perpetrated in Detroit. Rascals mingle cayenne on the streets and throw a mixture of lard, lampblack and other ingredients on well-dressed people. Girls employed in the large retail dry goods stores have been picked out for especial objects of persecution, and, since the stores have begun keeping open nights for the holiday trade, the young women have been subjected to insult on their way home. In addition to having their garments spattered with the mixture, they have been pinched, and efforts in some cases have been made to cut off their hair.

Three boys, arrested for petit larceny in Washington, Mo., were found guilty and punished in a manner that will firmly impress the occasion on their minds. They belonged to good families, and the judge on that account imposed a very severe fine, on condition that the parents would publicly flog the boys in the Court House Square. The fathers agreed, and about 1000 people assembled on the square and saw the fathers carry out the agreement. All the schools gave a recess, and the children were invited to be present and profit by the moral. The children were marshalled by their teachers. One of the culprits stood the drubbing without a murmur, but it is said the yells of the others could be heard two blocks away.

A Buffalo milkman who wears a five-cent piece as a watch charm is quoted as saying, in explanation: "Over a year ago I took this nickel, which was then beautifully gold plated, as a $5 gold piece, in payment of a bill. As soon as I detected the fraud I took it back to the woman who passed it on me, but she refused to make it good. So I fastened it to my watch chain and kept on supplying her with milk. But now every day I make her quart one-fourth water, and once a week I credit her with one-fourth the amount of her milk bill. When the sum total standing to her credit is $4.00 she shall have pure milk once more, and not until then. She knows the milk is watered, but whenever she shows an inclination to complain I handle the nickel and say that my milk is as 'pure as gold.' That settles it."

Beginning his eighty-third year, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps can look around and see but very few men of anything like equal eminence who are as old as he is. The German Empress is 73, Lord Lyndhurst is 88, Mr. Hicks and Baron Rothschild, the financiers, are each 87; Kossuth is 85, and Professor Owen is 83, but it is not easy to extend the list. Yet it is astonishing to note the large number of living great men who have passed the ordinary limit of human life. Of sovereigns, the Pope is 77, but King William of the Netherlands is well on in his 71st year. Of statesmen, Mr. Gladstone is 70, Mr. Bright is 76, Prince Bismarck is 72, M. Jules Grevy is 74, M. Leon Say and M. Leroyer are each 71, Lord Selborne is 75 and Lord Granville is 72. Of generals, McMahon is 75, Lebceuf is 78 and Bazaine 76. Of poets, Lord Tennyson is 78, Mr. Browning is 75 and Dr. Wendell Holmes is 78. Of musicians, Verdi is 73. Of engineers, Lord Armstrong is 77 and Sir John Hawkshaw is 76. Of painters, Meissonier is 72; and, finally, of showmen, Barnum is 77. Perhaps, however, M. Chevreul, the French chemist, who is fairly started on his one hundredth and second year, ought not to be omitted.

WE are rich only through what we give, and poor only through what we refuse.

SHE.—What a gorgeous sunset, Mr. Sampson? What a glory of orange and brilliant yellow and flaming crimson of those piled-up clouds against the deep green of the fertile fields and voiceless woods! He (a young man of correct taste)—Yes-s, but don't you think, Miss Clara, that it is a trifle loud.

UNITED we stand, divided we fall. When a man loses his hair he falls in his own esteem. Use Warner's Log-Cabin Scalpine and you can bare your head with pride.

Our Young Folks.

SALLY AND WINK-EYE.

BY CACTUS.

SALLY! Sally!

Sally was out among the fowls in the court, in the midst of all the glad, happy stir of farm life in summer time.

"Yes, what is it, Benny?" was the small maiden's response, and round from the way of the yard came Benny himself, a sturdy boy of eight, with fun and mischief enough in his eyes for ten boys.

"Guess what I've found in the hay-loft," said he.

"Oh! I can't guess—tell me," returned Sally, her pretty dark face flushing in its eagerness.

"Can't I I believe girls are made up of can't. Well, then, that sly old Judy has her kittens up there."

"Oh!" Down went the seed-basket, whereupon a mighty game of catch-who-can went on among the fowls, while away went the little girl, like one of the nimble hares out of the copse behind the house.

"I'd fly," shouted Benny after her.

"You know you wouldn't if you had no wings," came back to him, full of silvery laughter; and then Sally was among the farm buildings, in the stable, and climbing up the ladder into the hay-loft, like a very kitten herself for swiftness.

Yes, there was Judy, the tabby old mother, and her five kittens, not so tiny either, for they could wink and blink as portly as their mother, especially one black ball, which winked so saucily at Sally that it fairly won her heart.

"Oh! you dear little Wink-eye; that shall be your name," said the happy child, fondling the small smutty mortal, till her tender little heart fairly went out to it.

"And I'll ask mother to let me keep you for my own, I will—yes, I will," so she soliloquised, thoughts and words flowing together, nursing wee Wink-eye the while, and making her way to the ladder.

But no, there was no ladder there; no, the ladder was gone; it was a mercy that Sally and her smutty darling did not fall helter-skelter to the ground, and break their bones.

"Now that's Benny up to his tricks," quoth she, knowing him of old as a practical joker; and Sally called, "Benny!" the old Traveller, her father's horse below, pricked up his ears, and whinnied a call for the prankish boy as well.

But no Benny came—no sound or footfall answered, for, in truth, everybody was [illegible] abroad, and the farm was left to take care of itself.

"Ben—ny! Ben—ny!" screamed Sally, in her shrill treble, with the forlorn hope that he might be hiding somewhere near, he and the ladder together.

But only the echoes which lurked by the river answered her, while all the glad happy life laughed and sang out of doors. At first the small maiden laughed herself, and fancied that the blackbird in the elm-trees by the river knew that she was a prisoner somewhere, for it seemed to say—

"Where are you? Where are you?"

And the wood-pigeons answered—

"We know. We know."

But as time went on, and there came no rescuer to the small prisoner, she felt that it was no laughing matter to be shut up there when they wanted her in the house; and, besides, she had promised herself a [illegible] romp among the hay when her work was done. Thus musing over her unhappy fate, she thought fit to cry, and Wink-eye licked away her tears as tenderly as if she had known her all her life, and then she fell asleep. For the Wink-eyes kept her company to look, they also snoozed and slept, while the one had a little time of it, as for days past every Sunday morning, with their coming awake. And didn't Benny, down in the hay-loft, laugh in his sleeve over his little trick! Yes, he did, teasing boy.

"Sally! Sally!"

It was hard upon sundown when Benny called thus, for the second time that day.

"Yes, mother." The startled little sleeper thought it was morning, she in her own small bed, and her mother calling her to get up.

A merry laugh rippled up to her—not her mother's.

"Why, you don't mean to say you've been up there all the day, dawdling with those kittens?" quoth Benny from below, with a boy's disdain.

"I couldn't come down." Sally was half dazed and ready to cry. She was but six years old, you know.

"Not get down! Why not?"

"The [illegible] was gone." Sally was peering down at last to the dusky space where the ladder ought to be.

"Nonsense! here's the ladder all right."

"It wasn't all right just now," dissented Sally.

"Pooh! your girl's eyes couldn't see it. And haven't you been down to dinner?"

"No."

"Nor yet to tea?"

"No."

"Well, you are a duffer!"

With this elegant speech he stretched up his neck to [illegible] it by [illegible] a peg, and [illegible], [illegible] her half way up the ladder, and [illegible] her down, her and the two [illegible] treasures, Wink-eye.

"Well, you remind me of that old fellow who slept a hundred years, and thought it was only a day," laughed he, as the child blinked her eyes and looked bewildered, as they went through the yard to the house, among the red sunbeams.

All this happened when Wink-eye was introduced into society, and anon she was a well-grown kitten, Sally's bosom friend and confidant; many a pleasant ramble did they have together in the copse, stretching down to where the river rushed gurgling on to the rapids.

Woe to the miniature rafts of timber which Benny cut and sent down here all summer time, guiding them with a pole from the bank, and landing them above the tumult of the eddying rapids. The copse, where he felled his sticks, and called them timber, was the Black Forest of his imagination, and the rushing river flowing therefrom the Rhine or the Danube. His geography was a somewhat jumbled up affair in his prankish young head. But he saw it all in his mind's eye, the mighty felling and lading, the rafts drifting through the long days on the great solemn river, then the shipping for widespreading voyage. Ah! yes, Benny enacted it all in miniature the whole summer through. But who would have thought that this would lead to a tragedy which the boy remembered till his dying day?

"Ho, ho! the jolly cargo!" with a weak dissentient mew. This is how it began, while the sunshine laughed as if no weakling was being tortured. A shout rang out from the teasing boy, as Sally ran down to the river's brink at the cry of her darling. There floated the raft among the starry sunbeams on the river, and woe Wink-eye standing out in black relief thereon, mewing in kittenish terror, her pretty red mouth a marvel of entreaty. Benny was on the bank with his guiding-pole, steering and laughing to his heart's content, while Jack King, said to be the worst boy in the place, was on the opposite bank, and grinning almost from ear to ear.

"Oh, Benny! how can you?" screamed poor little Sally, at the perilous situation of her darling.

"How can I? Why, 'tis the grandest moment of her life," returned Benny, winking across the river at Jack King, and allowing the raft to float at the will of the river, as if in daring.

Ah! there! there! It is out in the heart of the river, beyond the reach of the guiding-pole, drifting, drifting with wild haste toward the rapids. It was pitiful to hear woe, waiting kitten, scudding on to her doom, her eyes turned towards her mistress, her red mouth pleading, pleading!

"Oh! Benny, she'll be drowned!" screamed Sally.

"Nonsense!" said he: "I shall catch her up again."

But no; the river willed it otherwise; the raft was in the heart of the stream, the small four-footed navigator was beyond the reach of either boy, and hasting to the rapids. Now, Benny, save her if you can!

The raft went swirling round. Eddy had caught it, as it had many [illegible] of timber ere now, but no dear little life had gone out with these wreckages.

Ah! ah! Wee Wink-eye, though only a kitten, sees the danger that is coming; two little paws are outstretched to Sally, and anon the wild waters are battling with the raft. Now a black spot is in the foaming water, and Sally sees no more. She leaps to the rescue; poor, little ill-advised maiden, with only her six years of experience, and her loving little heart to guide her. She is among the rapids, tossed hither and thither; that is all. She will never reach poor Wink-eye—she is hurtling on to the fierce falling waters, her red tongue pleading no more. And Sally; will no one save her? Where are the boys—Benny and Jack King?

Benny has rushed wildly to the house for help; but Jack, who can swim like a fish, is nobly beating his way to the little waifs. He reaches Sally, but the boy's strength is not equal to his brave, true heart. The rapids seem to laugh at his puny weakness. A man rescues them both, small, sodden, senseless Sally, to be borne to her mother; but as for Jack, he shook himself like a dog, and said 'twas only fun, if the little girl was saved, but it was no fun for poor lost Wink-eye, nor for her mistress, when she awoke the next morning, and that which had happened came to her like a sad, sad dream.

"Sally! Sally!" called Benny up the stairs, as she thought sorrowfully thereof.

"Yes;" a pitiful little yes it was. I am not sure that the mite was not crying softly to herself.

"Here's a lady waiting to see you."

"A lady?"

"Yes; a lady from over the water."

There was a glad ring in Benny's voice—something pleasant in his very whistle—as he stood at the foot of the stairs, waiting for his sister to come down.

"A lady in a hamper," shouted he presently; and didn't Sally come flying down the stairs then!

No need to say who the lady was, with those little plaintive mews greeting the very sound of her dancing feet. A cry of joy, and Sally held in her arms her own darling pet, come back to her from a watery grave.

"Why, I brought her home last night, little Sally, I did," cried Jack King, peeping in at the kitchen door. "You see, a cat has nine lives, and so has a kitten; and she got near to the rapids, but I see her, and coaxed, and called her, and reached her with a stick."

"Oh! thank you," cried Sally; "you can't be the worst boy in the place, you must be the best."

"And what can I be?" asked Benny.

"I know what you're going to be," said Sally, "you're going to be kind to Wink-eye and me."

"Well," promised Benny, "I'll never tease either of you again."

"No; teasing teasable things is rare fun," observed Jack King, "but it don't always end in fun."

"And teasing teasable things, as you put it, isn't kingly," remarked Sally's father, coming into the kitchen, and hearing the boy's words.

"You're right there master; there ain't nothing crownified in teasing cats and little gels," agreed the lad, with his high-sounding name.

MATTIE'S TELEGRAM.

BY S. B. EDGCOMBE.

"OH, please! I only want to send a message. And here's the money."

And then the little girl, standing upon the very tips of her toes, tried hard to peep over the ledge of the counter.

But no; it wouldn't do at all, which was very provoking. Mattie was far too short, even after doing all this, to be able to peep into the clerk's face—or perhaps the counter itself was far too tall.

Tiresome of the counter, to be sure!

This, too, was precisely what Mattie herself thought.

And then she knocked the tip of her pretty nose—most uncomfortable, too—against the disagreeable ledge, and then she gave up even trying to stand on tip toe and let her money go rolling about on the office floor in all directions.

"What's the matter?" asked a gentleman at that moment, witnessing her disaster.

"Oh! I want to send a message," came miserably, "but I can't reach up, you see; and the clerk—stupid fellow!—won't look down, as of course he ought to do; so between the two of us I might every bit as well have remained at home."

"There! Tell me what you want to say," came pleasantly. "And give me your money, child, I won't run away with it."

"Oh, it's only 'Come back, mother!'" came simply but earnestly. "It won't cost much, it's so short." And now, having met with a friend in need, Mattie was once more her own beautiful, merry little self.

"You see, I'm left at home—mother's gone away on a visit—and I'm miserable. Papa can't be disturbed—oh! how I wish he could! And the servants are all cross as two sticks, because they've nothing to do, I suppose, which isn't my fault; and Miss Tibbs—that's my clever governess, you understand—is as stiff as a poker. And so I couldn't manage to breathe at all, somehow—it was all so stifling; and off I came. I've run away, in fact."

"You don't mean it!"

"I have, though. There was nothing else to be done. Mother must come back. I'll make her!"

"That's right. And where shall I send the message? What's the address?"

Mattie was evidently puzzled; and then a sudden light dawned upon her.

"Why, address it to grandfather's, of course. It is sure to reach him. Every one knows him!"

"All right. And who sends it?"

"I do, of course. Why, what's the use of even asking me that? It's only nonsense. I'm I—and of course I can't be anybody else. Why, I thought you were going to help me,' came prettily and disappointedly, "and there's no message sent after all."

"You're a tiresome child!" exclaimed a woman's voice at that moment. "Why, if you haven't nearly frightened me to death, running away from home in that fashion. Now, come along this moment, Miss Mattie. It's a blessing that your mamma isn't at home, or she would have been driven half out of her mind by anxiety."

"But I shouldn't have been here then," came sensibly, "and you're only talking [illegible] nonsense, like every one, it seems to me. I've just been sending a telegraphic message to her."

"Telegraphic message!" echoed the nurse, angrily. "What a parcel of nonsense!"

"But, oh, dear! It hasn't gone at all," came now, excitedly. "I've just been remembered. Where are you—the gentleman I mean—who promised to help me, and didn't? Oh, there you are! Thank you. Now, send it at once, please. There's all the money I've got."

"It isn't half enough," he began, with a laugh. But Mattie's mood had now suddenly changed. The truth was that with her sense of loneliness and unhappiness because mother was away, and also her want of success at the post-office, she had lost her temper.

"I'll send it myself, then," came hastily, and proudly; and catching up from a desk near her one of the printed forms employed for such purposes, as she saw others doing, she took up a pen and began to write—

"Come——" Then suddenly laying down her pen, she sprang up.

"Provoking! If I haven't made a blot as large as an apple! Here's another printed paper, however. Start again, Mattie!"

"Come back," she now wrote, in letters about an inch high, and nearly half the same in breadth. "Oh! I forgot to add 'mother.' Stupid, of course. There! I've added it now."

In less than a minute she had alighted from the high stool upon which she had been perched; and then without more ado, as she couldn't reach up so far, she threw her horribly written paper, in company with the money, straight in the face of the clerk.

"Send it quickly," she exclaimed. "The address is Grandfather's. It's all right. Every one knows him;" and she ran out of the office.

But Mattie, now once more at home, was neither sad nor out of temper.

She had carried her point, and mother, she was thoroughly convinced, would soon be here.

"Miss Tibbs," she exclaimed, on entering the hall-door, "what's the matter?"

"You've given me a fright," came gravely. "And here's a telegram for you, too. I'm afraid it contains bad news. Shall I open it?"

"Certainly not. A telegram! Why, it's my own come back, I'm afraid. I thought the clerk looked stupid."

In this instance, however, it was Mattie herself who was acting so stupidly from beginning to end.

And then came a loud burst of delight. Mattie had already opened her telegraphic message and read the enclosed words—

"Mother is coming."

"Well, now!" exclaimed the enchanted child, letting the pencilled message fall upon the floor in her intense delight. "Wasn't it well I sent that message? It's quite wonderful, I think, that mother answered so quickly."

And meanwhile the puzzled clerk was standing in the post-office, wondering what he was to with those three big pennies.

As mother, however, herself explained afterwards, Mattie's telegraphing venture had been rather a novel one of its kind. "Next time you telegraph, Mattie," she said, "don't omit to give the address!"

QUILL PENS.—When quill pens were introduced is not exactly known. In the writings of Isidore, who died in 630, among other materials mentioned as used in writing in his day are mentioned reeds and feathers. From this we may conclude that quill pens were in use in the seventh century, at any rate.

In the fifteenth century literary men seem to have experienced a difficulty in getting good ink and good pens. This difficulty is frequently mentioned in the familiar letters of literary Italians of that period. Erasmus wrote thanking Reuchlin for three quills that the latter had kindly sent him, and hoped that Reuchlin, when he had the good luck to procure more, would send some to a friend of his in England.

The quill pens most generally used are from the goose. They are made also from the swan, the turkey, and the crow. Crow quills are the best for very fine writing and pen-and-ink drawing. Quills from the swan are the dearest. Quills for toothpicks are the commonest, and are taken from the homely duck.

England and this country import yearly on an average 300,000,000 quills. These come from Iceland, Russia, Holland and Hudson's Bay. The wing of a [illegible] produces only about five good quills [illegible] are the large feathers taken from the ends of the wing. They are prepared in various ways, the object being to "clarify" (that is, taking out the membranous skin from the interior of the quill) and to harden them. After being cut they are ready for the market.

HOW A LETTER CARRIER WALKS.—Says a St. Louis letter carrier: I have often been asked to explain how a letter carrier walks along apparently with ease at a rapid gait over slippery ground and runs up and down icy front steps while other folks are barely able to keep their footing while they creep along in rubbers or with a set of those steel-prong nuisances fastened to their shoes.

The carriers soon learn to walk over slippery places without falling because we have so much of it to do and experience has taught us how we should put our feet and legs on dangerous ground.

When passing over sleety places we don't walk erect, but bend forward, taking short steps and never lifting one foot get far away from the other. Then, when we start, the foot is put down softly, and of that [illegible] on the ground, with the heel and toe more [illegible] which looks to strangers and falls. It is not graceful, this way of walking, but it is safe, and I can pass any ordinary pedestrian on a slippery day and be in no danger of falling while he is constantly slipping.

COLD FEET.—Cold weather is here, and cold feet are now prevalent, and I should like to give those who suffer from that trouble a cure that has proved efficacious in all cases where tried. Before retiring for the night, sit with the feet in water as hot as can be borne. Try putting the feet in a little at a time and taking out, then try it a little longer again and again, till you will be surprised how hot you can bear it. Sit for a time, say ten or fifteen minutes, or longer, if you choose, when your feet will be very red and look almost parboiled. Then take a crash towel and dry thoroughly. Heat before the fire till perfectly dry, then draw on a pair of clean hose and go to bed. You will be surprised to see how warm your feet will be all next day. A few such baths will give you warm feet all winter; it brings the blood to the feet, the absence of which makes them cold. M. S.

A PROMINENT professor speaking on the importance of teaching physical science in the public schools, said that proper scientific instruction in the primary schools would teach children to avoid the mistake of attempting the impossible. While grammar should be put off to the last, language should be taught by reading, not by rules; the geography, after teaching the form of the earth, should be used only as a book of reference; and the commercial departments of arithmetic should be relegated to the business school; children, in their earliest experiences, have to do with heat, light, sound, movement, and magnetism. Physics should be taught by calling attention to familiar facts, and then explaining these.

TWILIGHT DREAMS.

BY F. E. HUNT.

"Sing to me, dear!" The voice came through the gloom
And glimmer of the quiet firelit room,
To me, who, filled with thoughts of other days,
Heard dimly, and saw all things through the haze
Of sweet, sad memories of lost delight.

So I but faintly stirred; and, in a dream
Of all that had been, murmured: "Yes, the stream
Flows clear and gently! Let us float along,
And you and I will sing a happy song
Of true heart's truest love and love's delight."

"O love! the waters are so blue, so blue,
And my heart, O my love! so true, so true,
And all things beautiful and all things rare,
As nothing are beside thy face so fair—
Thy face, my beautiful, my heart's delight!"

"Nay; but call back thy thoughts, sweet sister mine;
The deep sea-billows over what was thine
Surge to and fro; and thou art left alone,
With but a brother's love to call thine own;
And yet, for thee, life holds some small delight."

"O brother!" I made answer, "it is true
That all of life's dear hope, beneath the blue
And smiling waves, lies hid in ocean's heart;
But spirits are not sundered; do not part;
They meet, in dreams like mine, of past delight.

"And if no more upon the solid ground
Or treacherous wave we meet, we still are bound
By faith's strong tie, and love's bright golden chain,
To one another, till in bliss again
We meet, and dwell forever in delight!"

THE WORLD'S POSTMEN.

How strange to think of the wonderful organization which insures the regular transmission of every little letter, and its final safe delivery to its owner.

I have heard of a settler in a wholly uncivilized island, who, while building himself a boat, required some tool which he had left at home, so he selected a smooth chip of wood and thereon wrote a message, which he bade one of the bystanders carry to his wife. Of course the man, on seeing her look at the chip and then deliver to his care the needful tool, attributed the whole to magic. Nevertheless, he had unconsciously been a letter carrier of the most primitive type.

Slightly in advance of this, is the system of writing with a sharply pointed instrument, on long stripe of the firm green palm-leaf—a substitute for paper—which is in common use in Ceylon and on the sea-coast of Hindoostan, and wherever the cocoa-palm flourishes—or still better, the broad-leaved talipot or Palmyra palm. Whole books are thus inscribed, but for letter-writing it is particulary useful, and the missive is folded and tied up with a trail of natural string plucked in the forest, and is slung from a slight stick and so carried to its destination.

The commonest type of East Indian post runner wears a long white coat, very tight trousers enclose his lean legs, and his head-dress is a huge light blue turban. His letter-bag is slung on his side, and it is necessary that he should be a good linguist, and be able to read a great variety of strange, crabbed characters, for several of the multitudinous languages of Hindoostan are written in quite distinct characters, all of which are alike incomprehensible to our untutored eyes. The rural letter-carrier of Hindoostan carries a long stick with a sharp iron point, which can be used as a weapon in case of need. The stick is adorned with six little brass bells, which serve to frighten away reptiles and dangerous animals, and also to give notice of the approach of the post.

Of all varieties of Indian letter-carriers, clothed or unclothed, none are so picturesque as the Camel Express Messengers. The men wear a serviceable red uniform, large green turban embroidered with gold thread. From their girdle hangs a sabre in a red sheath. The camels are adorned with trappings of gay cloth and tassels, ornamented with blue beads and cowrie shells, and small brass bells round the neck to give notice of their swift approach.

It is said that their swift and rapid trotting, sometimes at the rate of eighty miles a day, is so trying to the riders as to shorten their days. Two heavy mail bags hang to right and left on each side of the camel, and the saddle is so arranged that a passenger can take a seat behind the postman.

In no country of the world is the postal organization more wonderful than in Japan; the chief marvel being that, till about a dozen years ago, there was no regular Government institution of posts in the country. In very strange contrast with the extraordinarily rapid postal developement in the little island Empire of Japan is the equally wonderful stagnation in the vast Empire of China, where, even to this hour, there is actually no Government institution for the transmission of posts.

But as regards letters, a considerable portion of the 400,000,000 Chinamen do occasionally exchange letters—those who cannot write for themselves hiring scribes to do so. These letters are consigned to firms which have houses in all the large towns, where letters are forwarded to distant ports, to be there distributed by special agents, who generally collect the postage from the receiver.

On the death of the late Emperor, intimation thereof was sent from his country palace (a distance of 200 miles) in twenty-four hours, which is the highest speed attainable in China. But the placid Celestials, to whom hurry appears a form of vulgar impatience, and to whom telegraphs are an abomination, are content that all ordinary communications should be conveyed either by slow paddling or poling boats, or else by foot-runners, whose high-sounding title of "the thousand-mile horse" does not quicken their pace beyond about twelve miles in twenty four hours. They carry a paper lantern and a paper umbrella, and their letter bag is secured on their back by a cloth knotted across the chest.

Of vehicles we find every conceivable kind pressed in to aid the post-runner in his labor. In Natal, Africa, the post-cart is a light four-horse vehicle—not much to look at, but capital as a means of getting over vile roads with very deep ruts. In the mountainous districts of Brazil, a two-wheeled wagon, drawn by oxen, is in use—the wheels being cut out a solid block and fastened to the axle.

In some parts of Russia, buffaloes, harnessed to two-wheeled vehicles, convey the postmen on their road, but more frequently mail-sledges are drawn by horses, by reindeer, or, in the far north, by dogs. The latter we find again in Canada, where the work is done by trains of letter-sleighs, each dragged by three dogs harnessed in single file.

Passing from Canada to the United States, we find the most gigantic and most perfect postal system in the world, the workings of which are known to all.

The desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one; but a longing for renovation, and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence becomes possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest; and the death bequest of Christ to men, is peace.

Grains of Gold.

From saying to doing is a long stretch.

They hurt themselves that wrong others.

A moment of time is too precious to waste.

The best of prophets of the future is the past.

Trust in God and mind your own business.

Moral strength is the highest kind of health.

Good nature should lead the list of the virtues.

No estate can make him rich that has a poor heart.

One word beforehand is better than ten afterwards.

The reward of one duty is the power to fulfil another.

It is a great point of wisdom to find out one's own folly.

Do not talk of your private, personal or family matters.

Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it.

Give your tongue more holiday than your hands or your eyes.

Examine into your own shortcomings, rather than those of others.

To see what is right and not do it is want of courage or of principle.

The injury the world does us is seldom equal to the injustice we offer ourselves.

Every time I speak a kind word I am adding a brick to my temple of manhood.

One good act done to-day is worth a thousand in contemplation for some future time.

Every time I speak cross and impatiently I'm weakening my nerve power and adding to the misery of others.

Femininities.

English society ladies have the stage craze on them.

Be cautious of believing ill, but more cautious of reporting it.

The first indication of domestic happiness is the love of one's home.

Diamonds are not worn on the street any more by women of refinement.

There are 13,000 colors, according to the Swiss ribbon-makers' catalogue.

Zinc is best cleaned with hot soapy water, then polished with kerosene.

"The McBattenberg" is the London name for Princess Beatrice's Scotch baby.

The latest things in pepper boxes are little flasks of oxidized silver, that come in pairs.

Three teaspoonfuls of kerosene put in the wash-boiler, will greatly assist in the last rubbing.

A novel ring design is of heavy gold set way round with emeralds in the shape of shamrocks.

A woman the more curious she is about her face is commonly the more careless about her house.

It has been estimated that not far from 25,000 women attend the New York matinees on Saturdays.

Bracelets are never worn in pairs. In fact, it is the fashion to only manacle the right arm at present.

It is alleged that a Chicago woman became insane in consequence of the treatment of a "faith healer."

Lamp wicks give a better light when cut squarely across, and should not be necked off, as some advocate.

A new magazine called "The Age of Woman" is announced. It will never be given away, of course.

Mustard mixed smooth with new milk and a little cream added will keep; it is very soft, and by no means bitter.

American girls are sprucing up. Some statistical fellow has estimated that they chew $1,000,000 worth of gum a year.

No man can bear the contempt of his wife. Be careful how you allow your lip to curl in scorn, for he will never forget it.

Milwaukee has a bowling club of 18 lair damsels, who practice religiously 7 times a week, and have become strong and robust from the exercise.

There is one thing to be said for the brass band. It never hangs back and blushes and protests incompetency when it is asked to play; no, indeed.

Miss Helen C. Smith, daughter of ex-Governor Smith, of Vermont, has taken the degree of M. F., (Master of Fire), in the St. Alban's Cooking College.

Homeliness has this advantage over its enemy, beauty. It is that it is as difficult for an ugly woman to be calumniated as for a pretty woman not to be.

The growlers on shipboard are of many sorts; but among the most original was certainly the Boston lady who expressed her annoyance that there was no elevator on board a Cunarder.

It is the ambition of every Persian woman that her eyebrows shall meet, or at least appear to do so. So attractive in Persia are eyebrows that meet that they are called the "bridge of love."

Ethel: "Mamma, I am writing to Nellie Lee; shall I say anything for you?" Mamma: "Writing to that contemptible person again? Yes, give her my love. How I do dislike that girl to be sure."

To remove fruit stains from linen, rub the part on each side with yellow soap, then tie up a piece of pearl-ash in the cloth and soak in hot water. Afterward expose the stained part to the sun and air.

A friend of ours wishes to know what more precious offering can be laid upon the altar of a man's heart than the first love of a pure, earnest and affectionate girl, with an undivided interest in a few corner lots and two 3-story houses on Chestnut street.

Bluff old chap, (with very loud voice,) just arrived: "My dear Miss Robinson, you here! I'm surprised! I'm amazed! Why, my good gracious, it must be at least 30 years since we last met!" Miss Robinson thoroughly enjoys herself all the rest of the evening.

A story is related of a young New York lady cast suddenly upon her own resources who knew how to do nothing under the sun but give dinner parties. This she turned to account by selling her services as dinner director, first to her friends of more prosperous days. She now has a clientele which enables her to live comfortable.

Why they no longer speak. "I'm going to take riding lessons," she said, as she leaned her head against his shoulder. "Indeed?" "Yes, and my father is going to buy me a horse." "Ah," he murmured, as he fondled one of her auburn tresses; "a white one, of course." Two minutes later he was wending his way home a sad and solitary man.

"Tommy," said the school-teacher, "spell measles." Tommy made the attempt with the confidence born of youth, but floundered hopelessly. "I am surprised, Tommy," she said. "Did you really study your lesson?" "Yes'm; but you can't expect a boy to spell measles when he's never had 'em!" was the way Tommy tried to get out of it.

It is reported that Lady Habberton will shortly bring herself and her dress-reform notions to this country. Her plan is to attack first the corset, next the bustle, and finally to introduce her bifurcated skirt. This skirt is like an ordinary one, except that it is cut open at the sides from hip to ankle. How these skirts behave in a high wind is a conundrum to the uninitiated.

Masculinities.

Lovers' purses are tied with cobwebs.

The friendship of the artful is a mere self-interest.

The wise man knows he knows nothing; the fool knows he knows all.

The man of pleasure should more properly be termed the man of pain.

A wise man will be more anxious to deserve a fair name than to possess it.

Count your resources; find out what you are not fit for, and give up wishing for it.

Many men claim to be firm in their principles, when really they are only obstinate in their prejudices.

In Germany the criminal laws are severe. It is made a penal offense in that country to strike a man who wears spectacles or eye-glasses.

Magistrate: "What is your name?" Vagrant: "That shows you are a green hand at the business. All your predecessors knew my name."

The bald-headed man is sneered at again. The latest craze among girls is a hair album made up of strands from the heads of their gentleman friends.

When hoarse speak as little as possible until the hoarseness is recovered from, else the voice may be permanently lost or difficulties of the throat be produced.

Dakota lady, to bride of a year: "I understand, Mrs. Pullquick, that your husband has reformed somewhat since his marriage." Mrs. Pullquick: "Oh, my, yes; John drinks as hard as ever, but he doesn't shoot as many people as he used to."

You cannot always tell what people mean by what they say; but when the bottom comes out of the ash barrel that a man is tugging and straining to get up the cellar steps, and the man says something, it is safe to assume as a general thing that he means it.

It is indeed at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honor and fictitious benevolence.

Mrs. Smith, to Mrs. Jones' servant girl: "What do you want?" Servant girl: "Mrs. Jones sends her regards and says would you be so kind as to count your children and see if you haven't got one too many, as our Kitty hasn't come home and school has been out two hours."

He, at a Chicago evening entertainment: "Do you know that very brilliant-looking woman at the piano, Miss Breezy?" Miss Breezy: "Oh, yes, intimately; I will be glad to present you, Mr. Waldo." Her: "Is she an unmarried lady?" Miss Breezy: "Yes, she has been unmarried twice."

Husband, complacently: "I did something to-day which I think no man ever did before." Wife: "What was that, John?" Husband: "You know how muddy the streets were after the rain?" Wife: "Yes." Husband: "Well, I turned the bottom of my trousers up before they got soaked through."

Jinglebrains, who lives in Boston and is bald enough to have a phrenological chart painted on his head, said that he never doubted the strength and purity of a woman's unselfish love since he awoke last Christmas morning to find that his wife had put a couple of ivory-backed hair-brushes in his stocking.

Gentleman, to bartender: "This cocktail isn't quite up to the mark, old man; but we can't have everything to please us in this world, so here's looking at you." (He goes to breakfast.) Same gentleman, at breakfast: "Poor coffee again, my dear. Take it away. If I can't have good coffee I don't want any."

An intimate friend of Professor Agassiz expressed his wonder that a man of such abilities as he (Agassiz) possessed should remain contented with such a moderate income. "I have enough," was the professor's reply. "I have not time to make money. Life is not sufficiently long to enable a man to get rich and do his duty to his fellow-men at the same time."

In a thriving town in Michigan, when the country was full of agents, and almost everybody was agent for something or other, an infant there being blessed by the advent of a baby-brother, was very inquisitive as to where the little stranger came from. Being informed that Dr. S— had brought it, he stood in a brown study for a moment, when, with the intelligent look of one who has solved a difficult matter, he asked: "Say, pa, is he the agent for them?"

A Southwark little girl was taking supper with a playmate a few evening ago. After the paterfamilias had "said grace" with due solemnity, the little hostess turned to her guest and asked: "Does your papa say grace at supper Katie?" "No," replied Katie, with charming candor, "but he says something else." This answer, of course, aroused the interest of the elder persons. "What does he say?" was asked the little visitor. "Good Lord, what a supper!" was the sweet and calm response.

"And do you love me so devotedly, dear," he said, "that you will give up home and friends and all that makes your young life bright and happy, to become my wife, and go with me to the uttermost ends of the world, if necessary?" "Yes, George," she whispered softly; "when I'm your wife your thoughts shall be my thoughts, your hopes my hopes, your religion my religion; and, if you should want me to go to the uttermost ends of the world with you, I will go—oh, so gladly, George—for I am so fond of travelling!"

Fayette county, this State, according to an exchange, is the home of men bearing very well-known names. Andrew Johnson is an industrious farmer of Wharton township, Jeff Davis is a carpenter of Fairchance village, John Quincy Adams lives in Jefferson township, John Brown is a Connellsville shoemaker, George Washington digs coal near Uniontown, John Kelly is a day laborer at New Haven, and David Porter will sit as a juror at the next term of court, Moses Rothschild doesn't live in the county, but carries a big peddler's pack on his back from one coke works to another.

Recent Book Issues.

The Christmas Souvenirs prepared by the Passenger Department of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company, for their friends, the press representatives and ticket agents, are worthy of more than passing mention. They are handsome steel engravings of high artistic merit. We have never seen anything of the kind neater or more beautiful.

"The Vanderheyde Manor House," by Mary Cruger, tells a powerful and exciting story with marked skill and effectiveness. The plot is ingeniously constructed and cleverly sustained, and the reader's attention and interest in the book is never allowed to [illegible]. The characters are spiritedly drawn and well contrasted, and the author writes with force and animation. Published by the Worthington Company, New York. For sale by Wilson & Co., No. 111 South Eleventh street.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The Metropolitan Magazine, New York, has published a fine and artistic picture of One Hundred Representative Americans.

In *Lippincott's Magazine* for January Brander Matthews and George H. Jessop have joined hands in the composition of the complete novel, "Check and Counter Check," a bright, ingenious and humorous story. Tourgee has a second instalment of "With Gauge & Swallow." Edgar Saltus has a clever fancy entitled "The Grand Duke's Rubies." Fawcett's attack on "The Browning Craze" will stir up discussion. The venerable W. H. Furness draws upon his memory for some "Reminiscences," and Charles E. L. Wingate contributes a series of letters from Clara Louise Kellogg, Emma Abbott, Christine Nilsson and other famous opera-singers, expressing their preferences as to operas and individual roles. "Our Monthly Gossip" has become an editorial of information, and it answers queries in regard to the Eri-King, Gambrinus, Poe's Detective Stories, The Babooshka, etc. "Book-Talk" reviews the books of the season. Price 25 cents per number.

USES FOR GRAVESTONES.—Nothing goes on in an uninterrupted career in this world, however, and even gravestones come now and then to strange uses. In a village in Maine, for instance, a farmer, having waxed in fortune until he was able to replace the slate gravestones in his family burial lot by marble ones, was too thrifty to throw the old slabs away. He therefore utilized them as doorstones, so that all visitors to the kitchen and the dairy trod upon inscriptions gradually fading away, which with scriptural phrase, and the overseeing of triangular visaged cherubs, recorded the names, the virtues and the untimely taking off of the forefathers of the thrifty farmer.

In another Maine village is, or was, a boarding school for young ladies, in the kitchen of which a large white marble slab, sacred to the memory of a worthy woman, whom it described as having died in the Lord, was used as a kneading-board. Now and then a loaf of bread after it was molded would rest for a moment or two on the deeply cut inscription, and the pupils averred—how truthfully the editor makes no pretense of being able to determine—that they had been able to decipher bits of the words printed on the bottom of the slices of bread.

But perhaps the most remarkable fate for a tombstone was that which befell the moss-grown slab in an English churchyard. An American parvenu of the same family name as that of the man whose death the stone recorded purchased the stone of a dishonest sexton and brought it home with her. It is now set into the wall of her sumptuously appointed New York library, besides a fictitious pedigree, which lies to all beholders by tracing the family of the present owner back to that of the man whose name is on the stone. As he has been dead 170 years, he is probably beyond caring for such things, else Mrs. Parvenu might have good reason to expect a call from his ghost some night, come to reclaim his gravestone.

GOD AND EMPEROR.—There were once two blind men, one of whom cried in the streets of the city, "He is helped whom God helps," the other, on the contrary, cried, "He is helped whom the emperor helps." This they did every day, and the emperor heard it so often that he had a loaf of bread baked filled with golden pieces.

This gold-filled loaf he sent to the blind man who appealed to the emperor's help. When he felt the heavy weight of the bread he sold it to another beggar as soon as he met him. The blind man who bought the bread carried it home. When he had broken it and found the gold he thanked God, and from that day ceased to beg. But the other continued to beg through the city, so the emperor summoned him to his presence and asked, "What hast thou done with the loaf that I lately sent you?"

"I sold it to my friend because it was heavy and did not seem well risen."

Then the emperor said, "Truly, he whom God helps is helped indeed," and turned the blind man from him.

THERE is no dearth of charity in the world in giving, but there is comparatively little exercised in thinking and speaking.

And they do say that Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup is one remedy without a rival. Price 25 cents.

The great success of Salvation Oil provokes imitations. Get the genuine. Price 25 cents.

THE BEAUX OF OTHER DAYS.

Nothing can exceed in extravagance the attire by which the beau of the Shakespearean period was distinguished. His hair was worn long and flowing, and his hat was made of silk, velvet, taffeta, or beaver, the last being the most expensive. The crown was high and narrow towards the top, and is compared by one writer to the "spear or shaft of a steeple."

The whole hat was often embroidered with gold and silver, to which was added a hat-band, sparkling with gems, and a lofty plume of feathers. Shakespeare, in one among many similar passages referring to the dress of the period, refers to these high hats as copitains, which, it is thought, is synonymous with high copt hats. Every gallant wore gloves in his hat as a token of his lady's favor.

The beard was dyed in various colors and arranged in different form according to the profession, age, or fancy of its possessor. Red was the fashionable color. The beard of the lawyer or the judge was cut straight and formal, while a dagger-shaped beard distinguished the soldier.

Some of the most effeminate customs flourished among the Elizabethan beaux. Jewels and roses were worn in the ears, or about the neck, while a carefully curled lock of hair under the left ear was regarded as a love-lock. Gems, appended to a ribbon around the neck, were also general.

Burton, speaking of this period, says, in the "Anatomy of Melancholy," "that it was once the fashion to stick real flowers in the ear." Elizabeth, in one of her sumptuary laws, ordered that the ruff, so much affected by young men of fashion, should be clipped when reaching beyond "a noyle of a yeard in depth."

The doublet of the beau was so stiffly quilted that he could only bow with difficulty. It was made of silk or satin, and was generally covered by a cloak of the richest materials, embroidered with gold and silver. The most expensive dress in Shakespeare's time was trimmed with sables, a thousand ducats being sometimes given for a single face of sables. The silk or velvet stockings were gartered with most expensive materials.

The boots and shoes were equally costly, the richest materials and much jewelry being employed in their decoration. All this extravagance in dress appears to have met with general approval, and Shakspeare expresses the sentiment of the time in the speech of Polonius to his son: "Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy."

It need scarcely be added that every gentleman of fashion had his dagger or rapier. The former was richly gilded and worn at the back; the latter was more a splendid ornament than a weapon of offence, the hilt and scabbard being always lavishly decorated.

THE HISTORY OF PATENTS.—The first recorded patent was issued by Edward III., of England, to "two friars and two aldermen" for an alleged discovery of the "philosophers' stone." It is to be presumed that the law officer of the crown had serious doubts whether the "friars" and "alderman" really discovered it, and he therefore stated it as an "alleged discovery."

The term "alleged invention" has ever since that applied to new discoveries. It is also a little singular that the first recorded patent was for an invention as impossible in its nature as "perpetual motion."

Lord Cromwell, in 1539, obtained a patent which conveyed to him the exclusive right to print the English Bible for five years. It is unfortunate for the revisers of the present day that they were not allowed a like privilege. The Stationers' Company, of London, the most odious and unjust monopoly ever instituted, were granted a patent in 1615 to "the exclusive right of printing primers, psalters, psalms, almanacs and prognostications."

The first patent on printing machinery was granted to Arnold Rotsipen, of England, June 24th, 1634, and the same year "John Day Grant, citizen, fishmonger and broom-maker, of the city of London," was granted a patent "for the sole and printing of the weekly bills of the prices of all foreign commodities for the term of fourteen years."

In our own country Samuel Winslow, in 1641, received from the general court of Massachusetts a patent for the term of ten years for a process of making salt.

In 1652 the Superior Court gave John Clark a patent wherein it was decreed that a royalty of ten shillings should be paid by every family who should use his method of "saving wood and warming houses at little cost." Patent laws are two hundred and fifty years old. Fifty-eight nationalities have patent laws.

It is characteristic of Americans, especially those who have met with some success in life and are ambitious to achieve still greater results, to break themselves down by overtaxing their powers, mental or physical, often both. This is confined to no special class or calling, but it is to be seen among physicians, lawyers, merchants, editors, manufacturers, brokers, and less frequently among mechanics. Once well started on the road to success, every ounce of steam that can be raised is turned on, and kept at high pressure until the machinery is disabled and the man is either retired permanently or compelled to take a long rest for recuperation. As a nation we live too fast and are too much given to burning our candle at both ends. Even the votaries of society overdo the thing and make a toil of pleasures, frequently to the permanent impairment of their health.

RULES OF A RUSSIAN CLUB.—The following are the rules of a club in a small Russian town in the Tchernikoff district: It is prohibited to enter the club with greased boots. Tradesmen are not allowed to enter the club in their working clothes, which exhale the disagreeable odor of fish, grease or leather. A dress coat must be worn at all New Year's or Easter dances. Any one appearing in a velvet waistcoat or a green necktie is fined one rouble. The fines cover the expenses for the band.

The members are especially requested not to use the window curtains as pocket handkerchiefs. Offenders of this sort will be expelled from the club. During dances members smoking in the ladies' room will be fined twenty-five copecks, the fines to be expended in toilet powder and eau de Cologne for the ladies. During quadrilles flirting is prohibited, and no one is allowed to step over the borders of decency. It is strictly prohibited to get indecently drunk, as has happened before now. It is prohibited to strike a partner in the face. In case of a disagreement at billiards it is strictly prohibited to hit a partner with a cue.

CANE HEADS.—Never before in the history of cane making have there been so many gold and silver-head canes carried as at present. The majority of these mountings are not solid, as a great many persons erroneously suppose. They are made of a thin shell, which is usually one-sixth gold or silver, and five-sixths baser metal.

The process of manufacture of these metal heads is very interesting. An inquisitive man climbed two dingy flights of stairs to see how the heads were made.

He was first shown a series of steel dies with which the cane heads were pressed into the desired shapes. The edges of the two pieces were then joined together with gold solder, just as the halves of a walnut shell might be welded. This shell was then filled with melted lead, so as to form a solid ground upon which the gold chasers can work, to whom the cane-head was then passed for ornamentation.

After the chasers have cut the yielding metal into figured designs the head was covered with whiting and submitted to the fierce heat of a gas jet, which caused the lead to run out. Then the cane head was polished and fastened upon the cane.

Seldom is woe's cup fuller than was that of a petitioner for alms in a down-town New York business office recently. He claimed that he had arrived from Virginia three days before, where he had mortally wounded a man in a duel. He was under $1500 bonds to keep the peace in North Carolina. On the night of his arrival in New York he was robbed of his clothing and baggage at a cheap hotel. Next day his wife's lawyer served a summons on him for divorce proceedings. So he drowned his grief in liquor, and was obliged to sleep out of doors if he failed to negotiate a loan of twenty-five cents.

There is a married man who proposes to take out a patent on a little device of his for getting rid of ugly domestics. His wife, like so many of her sex, has a horror for a pretty parlor maid, and stocks her house with servants remarkable for their ill looks. Now, when she engages a girl of unusual ferocity and hideousness her husband remarks in the stilly watches of the night: "My dear, where did you get that new girl?" She is as pretty as Hebe. What an arm she has and what an ankle!" That settles it; the new girl goes next day.

WANAMAKER'S.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 28, 1887.

Large as it is in other things, in Dress Materials this store is the foremost in America.

The Christmas part of the Store is every part.

Gift things are everywhere.

AT THE COMING HOLIDAY MANY WOMEN AND girls will be made happy by receiving Robe and Dress patterns—some in boxes, others not. Let us tell you something of the general prices: $2.50, $3, $4, $4.50, $4.75, $5.25, $5.50, $6, $7.25, $7.50, $8, $9.50, $9.75, $9, $10, $10.50, $11, $16.50, $22, $23, $25, $30, and $50. In number tens of thousands, and you can find them at the four points of the compass on the main floor.

These are the figures for Dress Patterns in prints, Century Cloths and others: 34 and 50c., $1, $1.10 and $1.25.

TRAVELING BAGS AND VALISES. ANY worthy Bag shape that is to be had. Any proper material.

Four sorts of Alligator, for example—black, light brown, dark brown and some in fancy colors. The chances are that you never saw more than two sorts of Alligator in any other store.

Sizes usually from 10 to 18 inches. The midway prices of two kinds:

14 in. Grain Leather Club Bag, riveted, $4.50.
Same, sewed frame, $5.50.
14 in. Alligator Club Bag, riveted, $6.25.
Same, sewed frame, $8.25.

GLOVES FOR MEN. TWELVE DISTINCT lines from Dent, London: $1.50, $2, $2.25, $2.50, $3.

Everything in Fur, Fur top, Scotch wool, heavy Silk and finest Cashmere.

Gloves for Women. Kid and Suede, and all the range of Silk, Wool, Cashmere and Dog Skin Gauntlets.

Gloves for Children too.

LET THIS CARVING SET STAND FOR what we are doing in knives and forks and such like table things:

5-piece Carving Set, of fine quality steel, celluloid handles, in satin-lined case, $3. They say it's worth $5.

BOOKS REACH IN AN ALMOST UNBROKEN LINE from Market Street to Chestnut Street. People's wants take them straight to the proper counters—Religious Books, Books in Sets, Grown folks' Books, Children's Books, Sealskin, Calendars, Christmas Cards. A place for every sort. Having the Books is only part of the way towards selling them; the price helps.

So will BOOK NEWS. The December number (88 pages, illustrated) is a brim with just what you want to know of the latest Books and the gossip of the Book world. 5 cents, 50 cents a year.

Send a letter for anything in the store.

JOHN WANAMAKER,
Philadelphia.

"YOUR wife is in a very critical condition, and I think that some specialist should be called in for consultation in the case." "There now, doctor, I was right again. I told my wife long ago that she ought to get proper medical treatment, but she thought that you might be offended."

IF some men knew as much as they talk there wouldn't be any sale for the "Encyclopedia."

OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH.

By Which It is Hoped Any Injustice May be Corrected.

TO THE READERS OF THE SATURDAY EVENING POST:

In common with many publishers and editors, we have been accustomed to look upon certain statements which we have seen in our columns as merely adroit advertising.

Consequently we feel justified in taking the liberty of printing a few points from a private letter recently received from one of our largest patrons, as a sort of confession of faith to our readers. We quote:

"We have convinced ourselves that by telling what we know to be true, we have produced at last a *permanent conviction* in the public mind. Nine years ago we stated what the national disease of this country was, and that it was rapidly *increasing*. Five years ago we stated that a *marked check* had been given it.

"The statistics of one of the largest life insurance companies of this country shows that in 1883 and 1884, the mortality from kidney disorders *did not increase* over the previous years: other companies stated the same thing. It is not presumptuous for us to claim *credit for checking* these ravages.

"Seven years ago we stated that the condition of the kidneys was the key to the condition of health: within the past five years *all careful life insurance* companies have conceded the truth of this statement, for, whereas, ten years ago, chemical analysis to determine the condition of the kidneys was not required, to-day *millions of dollars in risks are refused*, because chemical examination discovers unsuspected diseases of the kidneys.

"Nine years ago we stated that the ravages of Bright's Disease were insignificant compared with other unsuspected disorders of the kidneys of many misleading names, that ninety-three per cent. of human ailments are attributable to deranged kidneys, which fills the blood with uric acid, or kidney poison, which causes these many fatal diseases.

"The uric acid, or kidney poison, is the real cause of the majority of cases of paralysis, apoplexy, heart disease, convulsions, pneumonia, consumption, and insanity; over *half* the victims of consumption are first the victims of diseased kidneys.

"When the recent death of an honored ex-official of the United States was announced, his physician said that although he was suffering from Bright's Disease, that was *not the cause* of death. He was not frank enough to admit that the apoplexy which overtook him in his bed, was the fatal effect of the kidney poison in the blood, which had eaten away the substance of the arteries and brain; nor was Logan's physician honest enough to state that his fatal rheumatism was caused by kidney acid in the blood.

"If the doctors would state in official reports the *original* cause of death, the people of this country would be alarmed, yes, nearly *panic stricken*, at the fearful mortality from kidney disorders."

The writers of the above letter give these facts to the public simply to *justify the claims that they have made*, that "if the kidneys and liver are kept in a healthy condition by the use of Warner's safe cure, which hundreds of thousands have proved to be a specific, when all others failed, and that has received the endorsement of the highest medical talent in Europe, Australia and America, many a life would be prolonged and the happiness of the people preserved. It is successful with so many *different* cases because it, and it *alone*, can remove the uric acid from the blood through the kidneys."

Our readers are familiar with the preparation named.

Commendation thereof has often appeared in our columns.

We believe it to be one of the best, if not the best ever manufactured. We know the proprietors are men of character and influence.

We are certain they have awakened a widespread interest in the public mind concerning the importance of the kidneys. We believe with them that they are the key to health, and that for their restoration from disease and maintenance in health, there is nothing equal to this great remedy.

The proprietors say they "do not glory in this universal prevalence of disease, but having started out with the purpose of spreading the merits of Warner's safe cure before the world, because it *cured our senior proprietor, who was given up by doctors as incurable*, we feel it our duty to state the facts and leave the public to its own inferences. We point to our *claims*, and to their *public and universal verification* with pride, and if the public does not believe what we say, we tell them to ask their friends and neighbors what they think about our preparations."

As stated above, we most cordially commend the perusal of this correspondence by our readers, believing that in so doing, we are fulfilling a simple public obligation.

Humorous.

PRACTICAL COURTSHIP.

You say you love me. May be so—
I would not doubt your word;
But others before now, you know,
Have such sweet love vows heard
Who are not loved, now, as wives would
Be loved by those they wed.
You say you love me. Very good—
But will you like my bread?

You say you love me. You must know
Your words are sweet to hear;
Like tender music, soft and low,
They charm my willing ear;
But if you would win all my heart,
Possess my very soul—
I promise to do a husband's part—
Say you'll put on the coal!

You say you love me. And you sat
If I could love you too.
I own 'twill be an easy task
If only you are true.
This, this alone I stipulate,
'Tis all my heart's desire
That I may sleep till half-past eight,
And you will light the fire.

—U. N. None.

A bad sign—An illegible signature.

High connections—Telegraph wires.

Failure in the yarn trade—Writing unsuccessful novels.

The bald headed man can tell you something about "unknown parts."

Should pigs that run at large in the streets be considered public pea-shooters.

When you read that a millionaire works harder than any of his clerks, please to remember that he also gets more pay.

A correspondent asks "If it is really true that Job was troubled with boils?" There can be no doubt that he was if he had them.

A French gourmand says: "Appetite is the most ungrateful thing in the world: the more you do for it the sooner it deserts you."

Courting is a natural blessing. It teaches young people to speak mildly, especially if the old folks are in the next room, with the door open.

"Two knots an hour isn't such bad time for a clergyman," smilingly said the minister to himself just after he had united the second couple.

Raspberry jam is now made of stewed tomatoes and hay seed. Give them a little time and they will make white clover honey out of bone phosphate.

If the milkmen of the country should join in the general speculative boom and form a pool, what kind of a pool would it be? We think we know, but don't like to tell.

$371.21 for a Guess.

The readers of our paper will be interested to know that the proprietors of "Warner's Log Cabin Remedies" will pay $371.21 in cash for the best answer to the question: "What is the hole for that is in the outside of the chimney of the old-fashioned log cabin, as represented in the trade-mark of 'Warner's Log Cabin Remedies'?" A pamphlet with a picture of such a log cabin can be procured at any drug store. The answers must be sent by mail to H. H. Warner & Co., proprietors of the celebrated "Warner's Safe Cure," Rochester, N. Y., before April 10th, 1888. But one answer from each contestant will be considered. It must be *signed with the real name*, giving post-office address, and must state that the party *has purchased and used* at least one of the following remedies: Warner's Log Cabin Sarsaparilla, Warner's Log Cabin Hops and Buchu Remedy, Warner's Log Cabin Cough and Consumption Remedy, Warner's Log Cabin Extract, Warner's Log Cabin Liver Pills, Warner's Log Cabin Rose Cream (for catarrh, etc.), Warner's Log Cabin Sculpine (for the scalp and hair), Warner's Log Cabin Plasters. The answers will be referred to an impartial committee for decision, which will be announced April 16th, 1888. Letters of inquiry will not be answered.

Catarrh Cured.

A clergyman, after years of suffering from that loathsome disease, Catarrh, and vainly trying every known remedy, at last found a prescription which completely cured and saved him from death. Any sufferer from this dreadful disease sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Prof. J. A. Lawrence, 212 East 9th St., New York, will receive the recipe free of charge.

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THREE-HANDED DRAUGHTS.—So far as parlor games are concerned, the old adage that "Two's company, three's none," will soon be obsolete. A new version of the ever-popular game of draughts has recently been patented, which permits of three players taking part in the same game. The board is in the form of an equilateral triangle divided into 81 small equilateral triangles, 45 black and 36 white. Each of the three players has ten pieces, differently colored, of course, and plays for his own hand against the two other players. The rules and moves are almost precisely the same as in the older two-handed game, from which this new one is a pleasant change.

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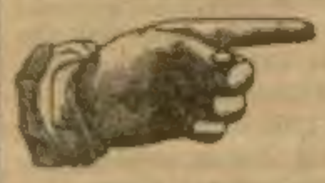

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Latest Fashion Phases.

One of the most difficult problems of the day, especially for ladies, is how to dress well without spending too much money: how to make the best appearance at the least cost. The necessary fabrics grow dearer instead of cheaper, and the style of dress has, until very recently, involved such a multiplicity of flouncings, kiltings, etc., that a vast quantity of material has been required, and an extraordinary number of hours have been consumed in the making. Time is money with those who earn their money by dress-making as well as any other business, and of course, this has added considerably to the cost. It is to be hoped, however, that with the advent of "housemaid," or, as we used to say, plain skirts, an era of comparatively modest expenditure has set in, as they can certainly be completed in far less time, and with half the labor required by their more ornate predecessors.

The maxim that in dress "the best is the cheapest" is so old as to be almost trite, but it is nevertheless quite true.

Dark stuffs, however, need to be of better quality than light ones. A very good rule for those ladies who are obliged to study economy is to confine themselves to one or two colors, as, for instance, black or blue, or brown, and white, so that one set of ribbons, waistbands, etc., and one hat or bonnet may be worn with two or more dresses. It is almost *de rigueur* for every one to possess a black costume, and for every young person to have a white one, which is always new and fresh after being washed or cleaned.

Good taste and a few dainty etceteras will suggest a good many changes and combinations even with only these two dresses, and if to them can be added a dark and light brown or blue, the semblance of a tolerably extensive wardrobe can be managed. A tailor-made navy blue serge, with jacket bodice and waist-coat, is the best possible dress that any lady can wear for walking during the greater part of the year, and may be varied with one or two different waistcoats.

The three young Princesses of Wales have recently had such costumes made for them, and their royal mother frequently wears something similiar.

A most important point in keeping an out-door dress presentable for a very long time is being careful not to wear it in-doors more than can possibly be helped. If each dress is kept ready to wear, with frilling in neck and sleeves, or collars and cuffs, in their right places, few minutes need be occupied in changing; and though it may with many be necessary to put on a good walking-dress at breakfast time and wear it till night-fall, the custom of exchanging it for something lighter for the evening is not only civilized, but economical. An old velvet or velveteen is most valuable for this purpose throughout the winter, as none of its imperfections, short of actual holes, are visible by gas or candle light, and a lace fichu, and something of the same nature at the wrists, or, better still, the sleeves cut short at the elbow, and finished off with a deep piece of lace, always make it look elegant and dressy.

And by way of a word to the wise, here is a suggestion for those who cannot afford velvet, and shun velveteen as being heavy and clinging. Save all remnants of silk dresses, and have the velveteen lined with them. It will look as good again, and will slip on and off with the greatest ease, and always feel lissome and pleasant in wearing.

For a thinner dress there is nothing like a good black net bodice and tunic worn over an old silk or satin skirt. It can be freshened up by ribbons of various colors, and is wonderfully tough and serviceable.

Grenadine wears so quickly under the arms that, though very pretty and soft, it has disadvantages well-nigh insuperable where the purse is not well furnished.

A great deal of economy may be practised in minor matters, though it sometime involves some extra outlay in the first instance. The frilling that has long been so popular costs a great deal of money, and though it keeps clean for several days, is utterly useless when dirty.

A few yards of real lace—Maltese, English pillow, Torchon, or Valenciennes—bears washing a great many times (always supposing that it is done at home by a careful hand), does not show the mending which at length becomes inevitable, and when quilled into the dress, with a strong white thread catching the pleats at the top to keep them in place, is more becoming, and in the long run cheaper than any frilling.

Out-door boots and shoes should never be worn in the house; nothing tends to make them rusty and shabby so rapidly as this bad practice, and the continual friction of the hem of the dress wears out the upper leather.

Slippers are the prettiest and most economical for in-door wear, because they can be so easily renewed. For this purpose, satin or prunella slippers should be chosen in the first instance, and when the tops are worn out, any one with nimble fingers and a rather long needle can recover them with small pieces of black satin, velvet or velveteen, fastening it down close to the sole with rather large hemming stitches, binding the opening with a bit of crossway silk or ribbon, and making all smart with a ribbon or satin bow on the instep.

The number of times that a pair of slippers can be made to undergo this process before the soles are demolished would hardly be believed by any one who has not tried it.

The moire ribbons of varying width are in beautiful colors this winter, shades of fawn, pink, grey, and brown being in the ascendant. *On dit*, that dark green is to be a prominent color for winter, but at present there is not much of it to be seen. Dark red seems popular, and in the country you see a good deal of it.

Crimson hats and bonnets of fine flannel are novel. The former have strings of the same, or of black or brown velvet. In recent railway travelling, long and also short crimson coats, with the hat or bonnet to match, have been somewhat popular.

For winter wear, hats and bonnets of brown seal plush, trimmed with red flannel, are to be fashionable. With the red as also with other coats, a fold of seal or beaver ornaments the edges.

A few long deep red cloaks, with hoods, have the sling sleeves drawn together in some indescribable way, with graduated loops of dark brown or linen to correspond.

Astrakan gloves, with the fingers and palms of leather, are to supersede the long popular sealskin ones for driving, travelling, or country walking. Another kind, also called Astrakan, but made of wool, close fitting to the hand, are worn in black and dark colors.

Ruby, navy blue, and crimson flannel shirts are most general for morning wear over some dark colored skirt. Some are worn as Norfolk jackets, others as Garibaldis, a few have yokes, and others flat pleats, or gathered and full fronts, with the gathers put in for about an inch at the neck band on each side of the opening. Some have high collars and are worn without white cuffs or collars, while others turn down or are cut out like a man's coat, and show a linen collar and cravat.

Silken shirts for evening wear at home are quite the approved style, and are useful for finishing off skirts the bodices to which are old-fashioned to look well.

Plush Norfolk jackets and also black and dark colored velvet and velveteen are worn with thick day skirts, and, with the addition of movable fur collar and cuffs, can be made to look cosy and becoming.

A contemporary lately announced that teagowns were going out of fashion; but surely that cannot be when a fashionable bride has eleven in her trousseau, and when a well-dressed woman has several in her wardrobe. For putting on between "the dark and daylight," after a long, wet walk, or a hard day's hunting, what is more comfortable, when it is too early to dress for dinner? Silk is a popular material; but satin Merveilleux and velvet brocade and lace, are all made up by the leading dressmakers. They are made tolerably loose, so that corsets may be dispensed with. Three pair of corsets are considered necessary by many women—one pair of black satin, one pair of white for white evening gowns, and an ordinary white pair.

Odds and Ends.

ABOUT SOME HOME HELPS.

With the present fashion of rugs, stained or polished floors are so common it is well to know how to "treat them at home." By the various stains almost any color or tone can be obtained, the materials are comparatively inexpensive, and can be had at any painters' supply store.

The amount of stain required for sixteen square yards of flooring is usually about one quart, but some kinds of wood absorb more color than others. Before waxing or staining a floor it should be freed from all cracks and unevenness, and rubbed perfectly smooth. Admit plenty of air while staining, and allow three full hours for drying. Then apply the "size," and allow to dry for at least three days, when apply a liberal coat of varnish. Stained floors are a failure unless generously varnished and well dried, as the color wears off.

To Wax a Floor.—Scrape half a pound of bee's-wax into thin flakes, and pour in enough turpentine to cover; let it stand all night, and in the morning stir well. It should be thick as cream. A waxed floor requires polishing once or twice a week.

To Polish Waxed or Hard Wood Floors.—Take one pound of yellow bee's-wax and one-half pound of potash; boil one hour, until well mixed; strain through a cloth; put on a wide, flat brush, hot; brush as soon as dry; have a brush made for the purpose—stiff, and very heavy, with long handle put on the side; use no oil. Keep the preparation on hand in case of any liquid touching and removing the wax. Wipe daily with dry flannel.

To Stain Pine Floors.—Use two-thirds unboiled linseed oil and one-third turpentine, with a little Japanese drier added. If dark brown is desired, buy a can of Vandyke brown, or if reddish brown is wanted get a can of burnt sienna. Mix the oil and turpentine with a little paint very gradually. It should be so thin that it will run readily. Lay it on with a good-sized brush the way of the grain of the wood, which should show through, else it will look only a painted floor.

Do not economize the liquid, and rub with a rag, to fill the crevices or remove any superfluous paint. Rub as liberally as possible.

A rich color is obtained by a mixture of the two browns named above. The tone of the rugs to be laid down should be considered.

To stain a mahogany color, use a wash of one part nitric acid to ten parts of water. This will do for pine wood that has not much resin. When the wood is thoroughly dry, shellac varnish will give a fine polish to the surface. A glaze of carmine or lake will produce a rich rosewood finish. Turpentine extract of alkanet root gives a rich stain that admits of French polish. Asphaltum makes an excellent mahogany color on new wood, when thinned with turpentine. Another way to bring out a fine mahogany color is to use half a pint of nitric acid, a piece of alum half the size of an egg, and as much logwood as will give the desired shade.

To stain wood for furniture and household ornaments, cabinets, etc.: Procure five cents' worth each of burnt umber and boiled linseed oil. Pour a small quantity in a shallow dish; take a piece of flannel, dip in the oil first; then in the umber, and rub well into the wood; go over all the surface of the article to be stained in this way once; next day rub again with clear oil, and the result is well worth all the cost and labor. For rosewood take five cents' worth of extract of logwood, dissolved in one pint of water; pulverize alum, and add a very little, stirring well; put in alum enough, a little at a time, to turn the solution a dark brown, too much spoils the stain; now apply to the article to be stained with a cloth; if too dark, add more water; when dry give one coat of oil, or if preferred, varnish. These are the simplest stains, and most like the natural wood colors.

To clean oil finished paint or hard wood use weak tea, almost cold, to remove the dust and discoloration, and then rub it over with a flannel cloth dipped in furniture polish, made of one-third linseed oil, one-third turpentine, and one-third vinegar; shake it well together in a bottle and pour it into a saucer, and rub hard. It is a very satisfactory polish.

CARE OF AN UMBRELLA.—Don't continue the practice of setting up a wet umbrella on the ferule. Turn it the other way, that is, handle down, when you come in out of the rain. The common way is bad for the umbrella, for it rots the material at the converging point of the frame wires. Any umbrella man will say that the proper way is to let the water run from the frame tips. A great many will object to this good advice because they don't want the handle moistened. But the handle will dry, or if it does not dry quickly enough it may be wiped. Umbrellas should not be permitted to dry folded. Open them to dry them.

ABSENT-MINDEDNESS.—One of the most celebrated of mathematicians was also one of the most absent-minded of men. On going out one forenoon he wrote in chalk on his door, "I am not at home." Soon after he returned, and, just as he was about to open his door, he was struck by the inscription which he had himself written. He read it as if for the first time, turned to the right-about, and redescended the stairs, repeating, "I am not at home."

Confidential Correspondents.

NELL T.—You can get the books by addressing Dodd, Mead & Co., publishers, New York City.

ANTONIO.—You can do nothing. Never expect gratitude. If you do, you will be disappointed. Try not to expect too much of men, and be content with small privileges.

CURIOUS.—To make invisible ink, dissolve one fluid ounce of common oil of vitriol in a pint of soft water. Stir well, and allow it to cool. When dry, this ink will be invisible, but on being held to the fire it turns an indelible black. Write with a clean pen.

F. B.—The best way to rid a damp cellar of snails and worms is to keep it as dry as possible. Set some vessels about containing quicklime, and, as the lime absorbs the damp, change it from time to time; you may also sprinkle some about the floor, as well as any kind of dry disinfectant.

VIOLET V.—Rubbish! If you are not staring about and behaving lightly, why should you not be in the street in the evening? A harmless girl has a right to take her evening walk! At the same time, if she is wise, she will do well to have one of her own sex with her as companion.

J. T.—We know of no gum or glue that is not glazed or shiny when dry. The dullest is formed by soaking gum tragacanth in about twenty times its weight of warm water for forty-eight hours, then beating up into a mucilage, and adding some oil of cloves to prevent mildew; this is nearly dull when dry.

PERT.—In a general way, we can only say that onions are very nutritious, and that they are good as a condiment or article of food, that roasted ones with oil make a useful emollient and stimulating poultice for certain kinds of tumors, and that the use of onions stimulates the secreting organs.

AROUMENT.—You and your brother should invest in a dictionary; then you would be able to settle your differences before they became acute. "Suit" of furniture is, of course, wrong; it should be "suite," pronounced exactly like sweet. "Suety pudding," also, is wrong; it should be "suet pudding."

CHOSEN.—If you do not care for him, do not wrong him by marrying him. Examine your own mind, and try to know whether your aversion is settled or merely capricious. The man may be made wretched if you reject him, and it is your duty to act cautiously. The simplest girl may mar a man's whole future, and you must be generous; but do not enter into a loveless marriage. No misery equals that.

H. L. B.—For mounting photographs on stiff boards nothing is better than good French glue used rather thin. Cut your photographs to the required size on a sheet of glass, using a sharp knife and straight edge. Place between damp blotting-paper for about ten minutes; then brush the back evenly with the glue, and place in position on the mount. Put a piece of clean blotting-paper on top, and smooth down with the fingers.

A. D. F.—Red or yellow petticoat skirt trimmed with deep Spanish lace. Black-velvet preferably-open bodice or basque showing white illusion or tulle covering breast in V. shape, and red or yellow handkerchief, or black or brown mantilla worn Spanish fashion over head or shoulders. Large sized jewels if any; bright stockings; slippers are worn. Complexion and hair are supposed to be dark. Trimming of lace, ribbon, or gold and silver embroidery to match.

THREE READERS.—The character writing the letter is good-natured, somewhat careless, but with a liking for taste and beautiful things. She is ambitious and wishes to improve. She is generous and strong in her friendship. Slow in speech, and slow to anger. Does not like her feelings hurt, and will not hurt another's willingly. The second is the most uncertain character of the three. She is possessed of a good many faults of disposition. She is disposed to laugh at what she does not happen to know or believe herself. She is fickle and unreliable in her temper; get angry quick, and quickly subsides. Her redeeming feature is when she really likes or loves, she does so generously and heartily; she is not overly fond of reading or writing. The third is the best character, and shows sweetness of nature, and good qualities all round.

MESMER.—The person whose name you have taken for a pseudonym was a German physician, born at Meersburg, in Swabia, in 1734. He first excited attention by the publication of a thesis in which he maintained that the heavenly bodies exercised an influence on the bodies of animals by means of a subtle fluid, diffused through the universe; and by the use of this agency he pretended to be able to cure diseases. He gained a number of converts and a great deal of money chiefly in France. But the French Government at length appointed a committee of physicians and scientists—among them Benjamin Franklin—to investigate his pretension, and the result of their inquiries went to expose the futility of animal magnetism and the quackery of its author. He afterwards resided for some time in England, under a feigned name, and then retired to Germany, where he died in 1815. Mesmerism, as it is now understood, has been carefully investigated, but although the explanations of scientific investigators go some way to account for the phenomena, the last word on the subject has certainly not yet been spoken.

AUSTIN.—1. The principal criteria of the date of an ancient MS. are thus given by authorities on the subject. (a) It may be known to have been carefully preserved in the Library where now found. (b) It may be dated by the copyist, as a large proportion of old MSS. are, the custom being for the scribe to write his own name at the end of the book, with the year in which it was executed, and often with the name of the reigning emperor. (c) It may have marginal notes by later hands, of which the date is evident. (d) It may be written over another writing—may be what is called a palimpsest, or receipt; for when paper, manufactured from the papyrus of the Nile, began to be scarce, and before that formed from cotton came into general use, parchment came to be greatly enhanced in price. At the same time classical works fell into disrepute, and hence the monks erased or washed out the original writing and substituted religious literature. (e) The quality or appearance of the ink; the character of the writing; the style of the ornaments or illumination. 2. The most eminent MS. of the Greek New Testament in existence is in the Vatican at Rome, and dates from the early part of the fourth century.